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The synagogue and the church.

THE SYNAGOGUE AND THE
CHURCH

יוצר אור ובורא השך

THE SYNAGOGUE AND THE CHURCH

BEING A CONTRIBUTION TO THE
APOLOGETICS OF JUDAISM

BY

PAUL GOODMAN



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To

My Wife

Donna di virtù, loda di Dio vera,
Ti ringrazia colui che t'ama tanto,
Ch'uscio per te della volgare schiera.

INTRODUCTION

THE fortunes and achievements of the Jewish people were for a period of over a thousand years, and well into modern times, considered in Europe as the pivot of Universal History. A larger view of historiography has brought about a more proportionate appreciation of the various elements which go to the making of civilization, but the Jews still remain the people of religion *par excellence*. Now, we may regard Religion as exercising a good or evil influence, but we must recognize its importance as a determining factor in human life, and, while we may condemn or applaud, we cannot ignore, the decisive part played by the Jews in the religious evolution of mankind.

It is the object of this book to bring out the extent of the contribution which the Jews have made to religious thought, and to point to the imperishable import of the truths embodied in Judaism. In order, however, to demonstrate the claim of Judaism to the attention of the world, it is above all necessary to controvert the historic attitude and teachings of the Christian faith. The Church, declaring the existence of the Synagogue as unjustifiable, regards itself as having entered into the heritage of Israel, but the last chapter in the history of Judaism has yet to be written.

In the vision of the prophet, Israel, "the servant of the Lord," is represented as reviled and misunderstood by those who have reaped the beneficent fruits of his sorrows, but there is held out the assurance that he will nevertheless live to see the time when ideal justice will be meted out to him. It is my hope that this work, which I submit to the attention and indulgence of the reader, may help towards this great end.

* * *

My thanks are due to the Very Rev. the Haham Dr. M. Gaster for the trouble he has taken in reading the MS., and for the valued suggestions he made to me. It is likewise a pleasure to record my deep obligation to the Rev. David Bueno de Mesquita for the friendly and valuable services he has rendered to me in the revision of this book.

I am indebted for the reading of the proofs to Mr. Charles B. Mabon, as well as to the Rev. Charles Voysey, the venerable head of the Theistic Church in London.

P. G.

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On the Anniversary

of the Birth of

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CHAPTER I

JUDAISM, THE MOTHER OF RELIGIONS

“ And many nations shall join themselves to the Lord in that day, and shall be My people ; and I will dwell in the midst of thee, and thou shalt know that the Lord of hosts hath sent me unto thee.”—*Zechariah* ii, 11.

WHEN the histories of great men come to be told, certain traits and characteristics of their childhood are often recollected, or are at least assigned to them, which are said to have already then indicated their future career, and the same process of thought likewise meets the historian of a great nation, as he traces its development from humble beginnings until it becomes a powerful factor in the life of the human race. The account which such a nation gives of its birth and early growth assumes a special significance when it is viewed from the vantage ground which its subsequent history affords.

The story of the founders of Rome and of its foundation is an interesting example of this kind. It was said that Mars ravished a vestal virgin, who was delivered of twins, Romulus and Remus. The mother and children were ordered to be drowned ; but while the mother became a goddess, the children were saved by a she-wolf who gave them suck, and a woodpecker who brought them food. Thus the boys remained until they were discovered by a shepherd, who became their foster-father. They grew up to be strong shepherd youths, fighting against wild beasts and robbers, until “ they

turned might into right.”¹ After various predatory adventures, the brothers founded the city of Rome, which eventually became the cause of a fratricide, in which Remus was killed by Romulus.

Now, if we think of the Rome of history, the city which, like a wolf, swallowed nation after nation in its ferocity and insatiable greed of power, and which afterwards, like its founders, turned might into right, the legend of its foundation becomes pregnant with a remarkable significance.

As a contrast to this, stands the record we possess of the creation of a small people, the Jews, whose political independence was destroyed by the Romans. Israel, unlike Rome, was founded on an ethico-religious basis. Isaac was born because of the faith in God's righteousness that was in his father Abraham. The descendants of Abraham were to be a blessing to all the nations of the earth, but it was only because “he will command his children and his household after him, that they may keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment.”²

So a people developed, more or less conscious that the exceptional position in which it considered itself as standing in the eyes of God entailed an equally exceptional responsibility.³ While still young and obscure, it felt within itself a superhuman strength, “the spirit of the Lord,” which would inspire it to conquer the world. Thus, an oracle which was current about twenty-seven centuries ago,⁴ and which has been preserved to us, gives a delineation both of the religious

¹ Niebuhr, *History of Rome* (4th ed.), i, p. 222.

² Cf. Gen. xii. 1-3; xviii. 18, 19; xxii. 18; xxvi. 3-5, etc.

³ Amos iii. 2.

⁴ The time coincides almost with the legendary date of the foundation of Rome.

evolution of the human race, and of the part Israel was to play in it ; and, in the light of the future history of this people, there is perhaps no portion of the whole of the Jewish writings more deserving of our attention than the following discourse, which a competent authority has declared to be the most sublime passage in the whole range of universal literature ¹ :—

“ But in the latter days it shall come to pass, that the mountain of the Lord’s house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills ; and peoples shall flow unto it. And many nations shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, and to the house of the God of Jacob ; and He will teach us of His ways, and we will walk in His paths : for out of Zion shall go forth instruction and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. And He shall judge among many people, and reprove strong nations afar off ; and they shall beat their swords into ploughshares and their spears into pruning hooks : nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more. But they shall sit every man under his vine and under his fig tree ; and none shall make them afraid ; for the mouth of the Lord of hosts hath spoken it. For all the peoples will walk every one in the name of his god, and we will walk in the name of the Lord our God for ever and ever.” ²

If we reflect on the circumstances under which this

¹ “ Höheres als jenes Fragment gibt’s auf Erden nicht.” H. Steinthal, *Zu Bibel und Religionsphilosophie*, 1890, p. 77.

² Micah iv. 1–5. The same prophecy, with some slight verbal variations and the omission of the last two verses, is found also in Isa. ii. 2–4. It was probably at the time a well-known oracle, but the one in Micah seems more complete, and more appro-

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prediction was delivered, we shall be able to appreciate the better the grandeur of its conception. The descendants of Abraham were then a people which could hardly keep its independence among the small neighbouring tribes, and stood comparatively insignificant among the polities of antiquity. Had these utterances of the *nabi* (prophet) reached the ears of a contemporary Egyptian or Assyrian, the Hebrew could not but have appeared arrogant and meriting only contempt, just as we might now treat a claim on the part of, say, a Bulgarian patriot that the capital of his little principality was destined to become the intellectual or moral centre of the world. But to us, living in another age, it has been vouchsafed to see the realization of the prophet's vision. What would have appeared incredible in his time, is so commonplace to us now that we require to be continually reminded of this wonderful and unexampled fact in the history of humanity.

This passage, however, not only defined the course religion was to take, that instruction should go forth out of Zion to all the nations of the earth, but it also gave a hope and an ideal, both to mankind and to Israel. It is this portion of the prophecy which is still too much overlooked, but which bears within itself the pith of the Hebrew prophet's ideal. It is of "the last days," "the far-off divine event," that the prophet speaks, and we are told that, through the word of the Lord which will go forth to the peoples from Jerusalem, the hostility of man against man, and nation against nation, will cease. When the art of war will have been

priately placed. The last verse is considered by some not to be part of the original prediction, but a few centuries sooner or later do not affect its significance.

forgotten, every man will securely enjoy the fruits of his labour. To an age which is becoming more and more conscious of those great defects of all civilizations, the curse of war and the economic struggle, the utterances of the prophet come with a special significance. The student of history will find that, like the prediction of the course of religious evolution, the vision of human happiness is surely, though slowly, making its way towards realization.

The prophet then proceeds to give us the reason and proof for the salvation of the human race. "For," says he to his Jewish audience, "all the peoples will walk every one in the name of his god, and we will walk in the name of the Lord our God for ever and ever." It is here, amidst the universalistic outlook of the prophet, that the peculiar character of the Jewish people, and the part assigned to it in the world's history, is proclaimed and emphasized. The continued existence of Israel and his faithfulness to God is the sign of the eventual ingathering of the nations unto Him. As Israel is the fruit of Abraham's faith, so through the fidelity of his descendants to the Lord shall the world be blessed.

Conformably with the prophet's outline of the spiritual and material salvation of the human race, Judaism, the concrete development of his philosophy, has two aspects—the Synagogue and the World—which combined form a harmonious whole. If Judaism rests securely on the recognition of its position in the world, it is because it has firmly established the inalienable duties of every man to his Creator, to himself and to his neighbour. These relations are laid down in a literature which is distinguished from the expression of the mind of all other peoples by a uniform, unswerving tendency

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concentrating itself on one point—ethical Monotheism. This idea has become the master-passion of Judaism, and, together with the consciousness of its possession and of its import, has remained through all times the undisputed cardinal doctrine of Judaism.

The Jewish conception of God is not the result of philosophical reasoning, nor is His essence defined and limited by the finite mind of man. The Jewish view of the Godhead is ethical, not metaphysical; He is not the object of speculative or dogmatic conflicts, but the Inspirer of the human conscience, the Being to whom every knee bends in worship. It is not so much His omnipotence, as the complementary attributes, justice and mercy, which are continually emphasized as His most prominent characteristics. The grandeur of God in His loving care for His creatures is well brought out in the observation of R. Jochanan that in every passage of the Scriptures where the majesty of God is mentioned, there is also proclaimed His condescension to man. When the Lord is declared as “the mighty and revered God who regardeth not persons nor taketh a bribe,” there follows the assurance that “He doth execute the judgment of the fatherless and widow, and loveth the stranger in giving him food and raiment,” “A Father of the fatherless, and a Judge of the widows is God in His holy habitation,” “For thus saith the High and Lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, and whose name is Holy, I dwell in the high and holy place, with him that is also of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones.”¹

¹ Megillah 31a. There is an analogous idea expressed in Ecclesiasticus ii. 18: “As His majesty is, so is His mercy.”

If the awe-inspiring holiness of this Divine Father is thus only a measure of His infinite grace to man, it is his grateful duty to fulfil God's Will, which has been revealed by Him with the object of procuring the highest state of man's happiness. The rule of life is to be found in a literature which bears divine traces in its pages. Taking this literature, as containing God's revelation of Himself to man,¹ Jewish sages have tried to determine its essence. These opinions furnish us with the definitions of Judaism arrived at by them and, though varied in expression, they are evidence of the uniformity in their lofty religious conceptions, and of the spiritual and ethical richness of Jewish life and faith.

To Hillel, Judaism was comprised in the golden rule : "Do not unto others what thou wouldest not that others should do unto thee." The rest, he said to a would-be proselyte, was only a commentary.²

¹ There is a typical passage in the *Pirké Aboth*, iii. 18, in which the reason of the superiority of revealed over natural religion is thus stated : "Rabbi Akiba used to say, Beloved is man, for he was created in the image of God ; but it was by a greater love that it was made known to him that he was created in the image of God, as it is said, For in the image of God made He man (Gen. ix. 6). Beloved are Israel, for they were called children of the All-present ; but it was by a greater love that it was made known to them that they were called children of the All-present, as it is said, Ye are children unto the Lord, your God (Deut. xiv. 1). Beloved are Israel, for unto them was given the desirable instrument ; but it was by a special love that it was made known to them that that desirable instrument was theirs, through which the world was created, as it is said, For I give you a good doctrine, forsake ye not My Law (Prov. iv. 2)."

² Bab. Talmud, tr. Sabbath, 31a.

Discussing as to what is the most comprehensive commandment of the whole Torah, or the Sacred Scriptures of Judaism, R. Akiba said that it was to be found in the verse "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself."¹ Against this, Ben Azai contended that it was rather contained in the "Book of the generations of Adam,"² meaning thereby that the fundamental idea of Judaism was to be sought in the account of the creation of man in the image of God and in the descent of all men from one common father.³

According to Rabbi Simlai,⁴ the 613 affirmative and negative commandments to be found in the Pentateuch are contained in the eleven characteristics of the pious Jew as delineated in the fifteenth Psalm: "Lord, who shall sojourn in Thy tabernacle? Who shall dwell in Thy holy hill? He that walketh uprightly, and worketh righteousness, and speaketh the truth in his heart. He that slandereth not with his tongue, nor doeth evil to his friend, nor taketh up a reproach against his neighbour. In whose eyes a reprobate is despised; but he honoureth them that fear the Lord. He that sweareth to his own hurt, and changeth not. He that putteth not out his money to usury, nor taketh reward against the innocent." Rabbi Simlai, however, added that Isaiah had reduced these eleven commandments to six;⁵ further, that Micah had brought them down to three:⁶ "He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?" Isaiah

¹ Lev. xix. 18.

² Gen. v. 1.

³ Siphra, Kedoshim, iv.

⁴ Maccoth, 23*b*, 24*a*.

⁵ xxxiii. 15.

⁶ vi. 8.

⁷ lvi, 1.

again comprised them in two : " Keep ye judgment and do righteousness," and that, lastly, the whole was summed up by Habakkuk in the one assurance that " the just shall live by his faith." ¹

To impress the teachings of Judaism on the minds and hearts of men, an institution has been ordained, which, as old as the establishment of synagogues for study and prayer, has remained to this day the central part of Jewish faith and worship. This is the reading of the Shema,² a collection of portions from the Pentateuch, to be repeated twice daily, beginning with the verse : " Hear, O Israel, IHWH is our God, IHWH is One, " and comprising Deut. vi. 4-9 ; Deut. xi. 13-21 and Num. xv. 37-41.

The Shema is the articulate expression of the Jewish soul, laden with its memories of thousands of years. It is hallowed by the first prayerful lisp of the infant, by the last breath of the dying, by the confession of innumerable Jewish martyrs. It has never been desecrated by the wrangling of factions, nor has it been used as a battle-cry for bloodshed. The Shema is not, as is often erroneously assumed, the counterpart of the Mohammedan chief article of belief : " Allah is one, and Mohammed is his Prophet." The Jewish declaration of the unity of God has in itself something altogether different from the stern, almost fierce, spirit of the Mohammedan formula. Since Abraham's appeal :

¹ ii. 4. According to Simon the Just, one of the last of the Men of the Great Synod, the foundation of the world rests on three things : the study and practice of the Torah, acknowledgment of God in worship, and works of mercy. *Pirké Aboth*, i. 2.

² It is called the Shema from the first word of שמע ישראל " Hear, O Israel."

“ Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right ? ” ¹ God is considered in Judaism as exercising an ideal justice, which, in its divine form, is tempered by mercy and love : “ The Lord is merciful and gracious, longsuffering and abundant in beneficence and truth, keeping mercy even unto the thousandth generation,” ² and the reciprocal feeling is expressed by the Jew in the following sentence, which, in the Shema as in the Pentateuch, immediately follows the declaration of the unity of God : “ And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, with all thy soul and with all thy might.” ³ The heart, the eyes, the hands, the whole man is to be devoted to this ideal ; he is to remember it at every opportunity and in every circumstance of life ; the home is to be pervaded by it ; he is to carry it into the cloister and into the mart.

Intimately with this is here connected the exhortation to carefully impart this truth to one's descendants. According to Jewish teachers, the words of God to Adam : “ Be fruitful and multiply,” ⁴ is the first commandment, in the form of a blessing, given by God to man, and the propagation of the species is therefore a religious duty. The childless man or barren woman is considered as having missed his or her purpose in life. It is man's natural bent to look after the material welfare of his offspring, but the obligation of the moral and intellectual training of the young is an integral portion, and one of the most beautiful aspects, of Judaism. The moral continuity of the human race, the responsibility of one generation for the other, man's duty to the past as to

¹ Gen. xviii. 25.

² Exod. xxxiv. 6, 7.

³ Deut. vi. 5.

⁴ Gen. i. 28.

the future, his debt to the one as to the other—as it is inculcated in the Torah—fixes the true position of the individual in the world.

The command in the Shema to love the Lord will, if followed, lead to real happiness, while its rejection will result in misfortune and eventual destruction. It is the law of reward and punishment, such results as our actions deserve. There is no promise of another world in this Deuteronomic portion of the Pentateuch; this was developed later on out of the instinct and experience of the human soul. God appeared unto Moses as אֱלֹהֵי אֲבְרָהָם, אֱלֹהֵי יִצְחָק, אֱלֹהֵי יַעֲקֹב, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the Eternal, whose faithfulness to man is everlasting.¹

In serving the Lord, we are told not to follow the desires of our heart and our eyes, but to be holy as the Lord is holy. It is an appeal for personal purity of the mind and heart, so momentous a question in Judaism that the lesson from the Pentateuch on perhaps the most important occasion of the year, the afternoon service of the Day of Atonement, has been taken from Lev. xviii., containing the laws regulating this aspect of human life.

This is the theme of the Shema, the rule of life, as it is to be found in the Torah of Moses. Moshé Rabbenu, Moses our Master, as the illustrious prophet is affectionately called, is distinct in character from all other founders of religions by his unselfish labours and by the absence of any claim of authority in his own words. His greatest praise is contained in the simple statement :

¹ Cf. the first two blessings of the Amidah. This may have suggested the remark of Jesus in Matt. xxii. 31, 32.

“The man Moses was very meek, above all the men which were upon the face of the earth.”¹ He left no dynasty, no hierarchy, no successors with extravagant claims; his name has not been used as a battle cry; he is not the object of superstition; his grave has not become the confluence of sordid gains and passions. The greatest of the prophets, the Lawgiver, to whom the world owes the Decalogue, the corner-stone of our moral system, passed away after having accomplished a work more lasting, certainly more beneficent, than the pyramids which his people helped to build, but yet his place of rest is not known “unto this day.”²

The Torah of Moses, the Charter of Judaism, is to be continually and publicly proclaimed to men, women and children. In this Charter the spirit of righteousness reigns supreme. Human life is sacred, for man is made in the image of God. There is an equal law for everybody: for the home-born and for the stranger, for the freeman and for the slave. Nobody is above or beneath the law. Not only is there a perpetual injunction in the Torah to be merciful and generous to the poor, but the whole is pervaded with such a spirit of sanity unparalleled in religious legislation, that we are told not to favour the poor in an unjust quarrel with the rich.³ Even the beast of burden is not left to the possible cruelty of man; it has also a right to the Jewish obligatory day of rest, and the ox which treads the corn must not be muzzled. The Torah of Moses does not require the belief of man in certain speculative or supernatural theories; such hidden things belong to God, man's happiness consists in following the commands of the

¹ Num. xii. 3.

² Deut. xxxiv. 6.

³ Exod. xxiii. 3.

Lord, which can be impressed on his heart, and which his hands are able to do.¹ The Torah prohibits the shirking of man's duties to his fellow-men or his sinking in the barren attempt to obtain salvation by castigating the flesh. On the contrary, Judaism is impregnated with the spirit of optimism and the joy of life. When Ezra the Scribe read the Torah to the assembled men and women, they broke out in a passion of grief at their sinfulness, but Ezra, Nehemiah and the Levites, the men who knew the Torah, told the people not to mourn or weep, but to celebrate the solemn day with feasts and by assisting those who were in want, for "the joy of the Lord is your strength."² This is the true philosophy of Jewish life.

The mission of Judaism was to upraise the whole of humanity as much as the individual human soul. From the womb of Judaism sprang Christianity, a faith whose founder, apostles and first believers were Jews, and whose foundations are so deeply imbedded in Judaism that the sacred Scriptures and prophets of the mother-religion are also the sacred Scriptures and prophets of its offspring. Mohammedanism is likewise a Jewish product. The recognized predecessors of Mohammed, the prophets of the successive true religions, were taken by him from Jewish history.³ The chief dogma of Islam, the unity of God, was directly borrowed from Judaism, and so were most Mohammedan doctrines and practices.

Judaism is thus indisputably acknowledged by its children, Christianity and Mohammedanism, the great monotheistic and world-conquering religions, as the channel through which flowed the word of the living

¹ Deut. xxx. 11-14.

² Cf. Neh. viii.

³ Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses and Jesus.

God in order to empty itself into the sea of humanity. Yet the ignorance and levity with which Judaism has been judged, and the contempt and hatred which have been meted out to it, both in ancient and modern times, represent an injustice and misunderstanding unparalleled in history.

There are scarcely any Greek or Roman writers who have left us any impressions of Judaism which show an even fairly approximate appreciation of its real meaning. Statesmen, orators and historians, men who are even to-day considered among the brightest intellects of antiquity, spoke with habitual and undisguised contempt of the Jews and Judaism. They did not care to inform themselves at first hand, and were accustomed to superficially judge the Jew only by his lowest standard. That is why a man like Cicero could talk of Judaism as "a barbarous superstition."¹ The spiritual idea of God entertained by the Jews was admittedly unique in the ancient world, but to the enlightened Greeks and Romans it appeared nothing more than the eccentricity of a small barbarous people in Syria, which would not acknowledge the gods like all rational beings. If Dion Cassius has to mention the God of the Jews, he cannot help expressing his impatience at such an evident absurdity by adding "whoever that may be."² To refuse to believe in the grotesque animal gods of Egypt, in the gods of the Olympus, whose ascribed vices rivalled those of men, not to participate in the obscene rites of the Syrian and Babylonian neighbours, not to adore the statue of a half-crazy voluptuary of an Emperor, who was everywhere unanimously en-

¹ *Pro Flacco*, xxviii. 67. ² *Hist. Rom.*, xxxvii. 15.

rolled among the gods, or even to stake one's life against the introduction of such a statue in the Temple of Jerusalem, above all the unwillingness to cease to be a barbarian and to merge completely into life and religion of the glorious Græco-Roman civilization, could only call forth angry denunciations, or, at best, a benevolent smile at the miserable fanaticism of such people. The Sabbath, which, as a periodical day of rest, has become an invaluable institution in modern life, could only produce raillery at the expense of the Jews and their God ; to rational men it seemed a most foolish custom to waste a seventh part of man's existence in sheer idleness.

Such was the state of mind of the leaders of thought at one of the most brilliant periods of antiquity when applied to Judaism. This feeling was often embittered by the discovery of the many imitators whom the Jews found. Jewish proselytism was regarded as an attempt to corrupt the morals of the people. Seneca, noticing the constant filling of the Jewish ranks with proselytes, breaks out in the angry exclamation : " The conquered have given laws to the conquerors ! "

We know that the whole fabric of heathenism in the Roman Empire, and far beyond its boundaries, has long ago collapsed completely and irrevocably, never to rise up again,¹ and that Judaism, either directly or indirectly, has become the ideal towards which humanity is irre-

¹ In what light the gods " believed in by Homer, worshipped by Socrates, immortalized by Phidias " are now regarded, is well expressed by Max Müller (*The Science of Religion*, p. 336) : " Can we imagine anything more silly, more savage, more senseless, anything more unworthy to engage our thoughts even for a single moment ? "

sistibly moving. Out of these longings of the world for the Jewish light, Christianity and Mohammedanism were born. These religions brought to the world a large measure of Jewish truth, but, like Hellenism when it conquered Asia, they soon lost a great deal of their original purity, and have ever had to seek it at their source. This was almost inevitable with the rapid strides which they made and in the wholesale conversions they effected. But if Christianity and Mohammedanism soon placed themselves on wrong bases, their subsequent history still further increased the instability of their pretensions. They were forced to mingle their original characteristics with the superstitions of the people who became their votaries. This accounts for the fact that while Christianity became occidentalized, it lost its hold on the Orient, which turned Mohammedan. They became so far geographical in their diffusion that for those living in Europe it is considered unnecessary to seriously study or combat the claims of Mohammedanism.¹ This would only have an academic value for us, and is, therefore, excluded from the scope of this work. But it is remarkable that both Christianity and Mohammedanism concur in the divine mission of the Jews; the views of those distinguished pagans who so misconstrued and despised Judaism are nowhere more warmly repudiated than by their own countrymen.

Our modern civilization, whilst fully recognizing the greatness of the ancient Greeks and Romans, has completely discarded their notion of Judaism. Whether it be those who acknowledge allegiance to the doctrines

¹ Just as for the Mohammedan in Mecca or Teheran, Christianity represents nothing more than the name of a false and alien religion, without the slightest claim to his consideration.

enunciated by the Jews, or those who are more or less opposed to them, all may be said to agree to the incomparable position which the Jews occupied in the realm of Religion, and that, therefore, the proud and cultured Greeks and Romans were hopelessly wrong in their estimate of the religion of the so-called barbarous Jews. It would be superfluous to quote any evidence substantiating this, but two opinions culled from opposite poles of thought may perhaps be taken as representative. Prof. Carl Heinrich Cornill, a Christian biblical scholar of note, says: "The history of the whole human race has produced nothing which can even remotely be compared with Israelitish prophetism; through this prophetism, Israel became the prophet of humanity. May it never be overlooked or forgotten: the most precious and noble which humanity possesses, it owes to Israel."¹ Nietzsche, the anti-Jewish and anti-Christian philosopher, continues in the same strain: "In the 'Old Testament,' the book of the divine Righteousness, there are to be found men, things and utterances in so exalted a style that Greek and Indian literature have nothing to place beside it. One stands with dread and awe before these mighty remains of humanity's past."²

Christianity, which had been at first a part of Judaism, broke away from it as soon as it assimilated ideas opposed to the mother-religion. As an independent organism, Christianity evolved dogmas, ceremonies and a ritual of its own. The Holy One was explained and worshipped as a Trinity—the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost; God had appeared in the body of a man, and,

¹ *Über d. Isr. Prophetismus*, end.

² *Jenseits von Gut und Böse*, § 52.

overriding the second commandment, which had saved Judaism from the fantastic material representations of the deities in the Egyptian, Hindu, Greek and Roman pantheons, Christianity established the worship of images. A complex, yet sharply defined, system of all things human and divine, of the fall and subsequent redemption of man, was elaborated as a code of beliefs only to be doubted at the risk of body and soul. A gallery of all sorts and conditions of saints, with an attendant worship of their relics; a monasticism, pernicious in its working, sprang up and spread, and a hierarchy was created which, in extent and power, is unequalled in history.

The attitude of the Church towards the Synagogue was one of unqualified hostility. Though the priests in Christian Rome voluntarily confessed that the scribes in ancient pagan Rome had taken up a decidedly false position towards Judaism, Christianity contended that the existence of Judaism was now inexcusable. Now, as then, the almost unlimited power and splendour of the Roman Church were pitted against the poor, hunted denizens of the Jews' quarters. But if the might of heathen Rome was powerless against the irresistible tide of truth, and was overwhelmed by it, the same fate overtook also Christian Rome. If the heathen Empire lacked ten righteous men who could prove its salvation, the Catholic Church was practically saved in so far as righteousness had not altogether left her. The collapse of her carefully built edifice occurred with a startling suddenness, and the so-called Reformation of the Christian Church took place. It was a cry for the source of the religion: a longing, even though an unconscious one, to regain the Jewish faith and life. The Reformation

was to a very large extent a failure, but it proclaimed that for at least twelve centuries, out of fifteen, Christianity had pursued a wrong track, and that Christianity, only a little time subsequent to the death of its founder, became corrupt in doctrine, and even in conduct. If the Reformation left the Trinity and other Christian dogmas undisturbed, it cleared them of many accretions they had received in Catholicism. The "Mother of God," as well as the saints, were thrown down from their pedestals, and the world saw the curious spectacle of vast multitudes of people tearing down the images of Jesus and the Christian saints, and irreverently scattering their relics, with the same fanaticism with which they had adored them only yesterday. Most of the sacred practices of the Church and its holiest institutions were unhesitatingly abandoned; the monastic orders were torn up root and branch; the once venerated Holy Mother Church became in the eyes of its former votaries an abomination—and the erstwhile Holy Father was proclaimed the Anti-Christ.

If we overlook the undoubted imperfections and the violence of this Reformation, we find in it nothing less than a confession of the false teachings of the Church, and a justification of the Jewish opposition to her. The Church, the depository of the truth of Christ, had gone terribly astray from almost the commencement of her career, and Judaism had been right in many things in which the Church had been wrong. History repeated itself, and we find here again an exact repetition of the blindness and pride and subsequent fall of the religion and polity of ancient Rome. In both instances the reparation to Judaism was awful in the extreme.

Some of the Reformers, like Luther, considered that

the Jews might be won over to Christianity, now that it had, in their view, been purified from the dross with which it had for so long been mingled. But they tried in vain to compress the waters of a great river into the narrow bed of a canal, instead of allowing it to fulfil its destined purpose in the economy of the world. Judaism is too large to be contained in any Christian sect, however eclectic it might be rendered and however attractive it might be fashioned by its founders.

Instead of learning its lesson of Christian history to the end, Reformed Christianity retained many of the false positions held by the ancient Church, and occupied new, and some even more untenable, ones. The fate of the Reformed Churches is becoming as powerful a witness to the truth of Judaism as that of the Roman Church. Not only have many of the essential doctrines of the new Churches proved a source of weakness to them, but some of them have been dropped or are becoming obsolete. The beliefs which they took over, or which they created, have been subjected to the test of criticism and have been found wanting. The fundamental ideas and doctrines of all Christian Churches—the Trinity, the birth, resurrection and ascension of Jesus, the fall and salvation of man, have no place in our modern thought. They may be recited as an iron-bound creed in the churches and chapels, but no philosopher will build his system on them, and the scientist only looks at them with disdain. In glancing over the works of our great writers, poets and thinkers we find that they are almost all hostile to the dogmatic side of Christianity ; if they are not positively anti-Christian—and in a sense even some avowed Christians, like Tolstoy, are actually anti-Christian—they

are, like Goethe, distinctly non-Christian ¹, and can only appreciate the moral aspect of Christianity. It is now being gradually recognized that Christian morality is in reality Jewish, and had, with an incomparable power and grace, been proclaimed by Jewish prophets and psalmists many centuries before Jesus, without the admixture of the dogmas and false science with which it was indissolubly interwoven even in the earliest form of Christianity. To this source of morality and righteousness all may come and quench their thirst. Even those who stand perplexed, not knowing whither to turn in their demand for a rule of life, may in effect agree with the confession of Professor Huxley, the godfather of Agnosticism: "I have a great respect for the Nazarenism of Jesus—very little for later Christianity. But the only religion that appeals to me is prophetic Judaism." ²

The spread of ethical Monotheism, the subordination of the great crises of history to this all-absorbing object, the fundamental difference between Judaism and the religions opposed to it, are set out by one of the most illustrious minds which have shaped the thought of the Synagogue, in the forty-fifth chapter of Isaiah—the first Jewish controversy with a noble religion, worthy of Judaism itself.

To this Jewish prophet, Cyrus is not only the mighty conqueror of Empires, but God's Anointed, the Messiah, the Christ, who in the overthrow of the Babylonian State is the instrument of God's far-seeing purpose. Cyrus is indeed quite unconscious of the transcendent rôle he is called upon to play; his wonderful martial

¹ This is his own description of his religious position in a letter to Lavater.

² Prof. Huxley in a letter to Romanes.

successes are to him only feats of arms, and his permission to the Jews to re-establish a small community in their country might be to him nothing more than an unimportant incident in his wise statesmanship. But it was the God of Israel who had crushed the forces of many peoples, and smoothed the way for Cyrus, that the Jewish ideal might proceed towards its realization; that the world should ultimately know that there is only one God, "Who formeth light and createth darkness," Who is the source of righteousness, and the sole Saviour of the human race.

The condition of the Jews under Cyrus has become typical, and furnishes lessons that hold good for all times. In his great Empire, the Jews formed a small people, doubly insignificant on account of their homeless condition, and their helpless subjection to the mercy of every capricious king. Yet the Jewish heart was large and wise enough to adapt itself to circumstances, and, unlike every other religion, Judaism alone can sincerely call the unbelieving, but beneficent, ruler, the Shepherd and the Anointed of God.¹ The Jews represented then the unprecedented spectacle (and in this respect they have remained unchanged ever since) of a nation that not only faithfully maintained its beliefs and hopes amidst unsympathetic and hostile surroundings, but were contented and loyal under the authorities of a foreign religion. That this absence of the intransigent spirit, unavoidable in Christianity and Mohammedanism under such conditions, that the separation of Church and State thus initiated by the Jews, does not betoken mere callousness on the part of Judaism as

¹ Isa. xlv. 28; xlv. i.

regards the welfare of humanity at large, is simply disproved by the great prophet, by whom the crisis of which he was a witness was construed as another step in God's education of mankind through His servant Israel.

The Jewish philosophy of Universal History finds a similar explanation for the cataclysms to which the struggles of man have periodically given birth from primitive to modern times—from the fall of Babylon down to the French Revolution. Whatever their apparent imperfections, the great conquerors—from Cyrus to Napoleon I—are instruments of an all-directing and beneficent Will¹; whatever their undoubted errors, the great religious reformers—from Zoroaster to Luther—are carrying out God's purpose in the education of the race. The God of Judaism is the God of History. It is through man that He works, and through this manifestation of Him we recognize His sway over our conscience and destiny, far beyond our transient existence. For religions like Christianity and Mohammedanism, each claiming to be the sole depository of truth, the course of history presents perplexing and inexplicable difficulties. If Mohammedanism can only bemoan the eclipse of its fortunes, Christianity cannot account for the insuperable check it received by the appearance and wonderful success of that rival religion. To the Roman Catholic, who sees in his sect the Church of Christ, outside of which there is no salvation for the human race, the Greek schism, the Reformation, the French Revolution, the

¹ Even Nebuchadnezzar, the man who destroyed the Jewish polity and temple, and carried the people away captive, is called by a Jewish prophet "God's servant" (Jer. xxv. 9).

slow but sure decline of the power and influence of Rome, are insoluble mysteries. Nor can the countless divisions of Protestantism find any explanation of their own positive assertion, to which their very existence bears witness, that the Church of Christ has been corrupt for the longest part of her existence, and that to the present day those who have truly found him, even in his own Church, represent but a small number.

יֹצֵר אֹר וּבֹרֵא חֹשֶׁךְ “He formeth light and createth darkness,”¹ is a formula that we can take as a Jewish touchstone of truth. In Judaism there is no equal combat, with a doubtful issue, between a god and a devil, between the light and the darkness, no evil “prince of this world” opposing a beneficent kingdom “not of this world.” This argument was applied by the prophet to the religion of Zoroaster, the faith of Cyrus, the generous protector of the Jews. The prophet boldly attacked its fundamental error—the doctrine of the warring principles of light and darkness, good and evil, Ormazd and Ahriman. At the time of Cyrus, Zoroastrianism was at its full strength, and, as the religion of the powerful Persian Empire, it became supreme in Central Asia; it was also a religion full of high spiritual ideas, with sufficient inner strength to produce a revival many centuries after its birth. But it has passed away, and now exists only as a relic among a very small community in India. The Book of Zoroaster, the Zend Avesta, is only studied as one of the dead literatures of ancient times, and it is not without interest that among those who have done most to resuscitate it for the world at large has been a Jewish scholar, the late James Darmesteter.

¹ Isa. xlv. 7.

The idea of an irreconcilable conflict of the principles of light and darkness, matter and spirit, the world and the Church, is also the initial error inherent in Christianity. The fall of man and his subsequent redemption by Jesus make it, in this respect, the counterpart of ancient Parseeism. The Redeemer was born of a virgin, because marriage and the propagation of the species are intrinsically evil. Man, as he stands, is utterly bad by reason of his very birth ; he lives under a perpetual curse and dies eternally damned. The Gnostic sects, which arose in the Christian Church soon after its foundation, logically placed the First Person of the Trinity, as the power of evil, in antagonism to the Second Person, the power of good—the former condemning the world, the latter saving it : one representing Judaism, the other Christianity.

Against this rock the Church is being wrecked. At every shock Christianity quakes to its foundations. These shocks are becoming more frequent and sustained, and at no period of its history was the number of those who discerned the true position, and tried to save themselves, so large as at the present day.

To these new פליטי הגוים, to those who have escaped from the dominant and popular Christian Churches, indeed to all those who have either sunk into materialism or are floundering in the midst of a pseudo-spiritualism, Judaism submits the moral to be derived from the history of Israel, the witness to the Holy One, and appeals to them in the words of the prophet, when he concluded his controversy with the Zoroastrianism of old :—

“ Assemble yourselves and come ; draw near together, פליטי הגוים, ye that are escaped of the nations : they have

no knowledge that carry the wood of the graven image, and pray unto a god that cannot save. Declare ye, and bring it forth ; yea, let them take counsel together ; who hath shewed this from ancient time ? who hath declared it of old ? have not I the Lord ? and there is no God else beside Me ; a just God and a Saviour ; there is none beside Me. Look unto Me and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth : for I am God, and there is none else. By Myself have I sworn, the word is gone forth from My mouth in righteousness, and shall not return : that unto Me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear. Only in the Lord, shall one say unto Me, is righteousness and strength : even to Him shall men come ; and all that are incensed against Him shall be ashamed.

“ In the Lord shall all the seed of Israel be justified and shall glory.”¹

¹ Isa. xlv. 20-25.

CHAPTER II

THE SIGN OF THE COVENANT

“ They gat not the land in possession by their own sword, neither did their own arm save them : but Thy right hand, and Thine arm, and the light of Thy countenance, because Thou hadst a favour unto them.”—*Psaln* xliv. 3.

IN the religious consciousness of Judaism there looms as the first mark of its life a covenant by which God had consecrated Israel for its mission. The sign of this covenant and of its continuance was differently expressed, but it is contained in the pledge that Israel was for ever to remain not only a people, but a people before God.¹ The two conditions are interdependent, for the dedication of Israel to God is synonymous with its existence. The Jewish people could not live were it to deny its purpose and justification of being, just as, on the other hand, the power of endurance and rejuvenation, by which it has defied every misfortune, makes its existence to-day the guarantee of an inner strength which can rise superior to the force of external circumstances.

In order to realize the wonderful vitality displayed by the Jewish people, we have only to reflect on the fate of the nations amidst which it has been placed during its chequered and eventful career. We need hardly refer to those of whose existence we know almost only through

¹ Jer. xxxi. 36.

the literature of the Jews, but even the mighty Empires connected with early Jewish history have passed away like a stately procession on the stage of time, leaving of their glory but a few melancholy ruins and inscriptions, in the elucidation of which Jewish scholars are contributing their share. On the other hand we also know how small was the political power of the ancient Israelites. They were generally subject to one of the great Empires of the East—Egypt, Assyria, Babylonia, Persia—names which most people have become acquainted with through the history of the Jews.

The Jews are not indeed the only existing people which dates its origin back into remote antiquity, but there is no other people which can claim at the same time both the age and the indomitable vigour of the Jews. For not only has it been allotted to them to see the ancient Empires of Asia and Africa pass away like shadows, and to witness the fall of Rome and Constantinople, but also to have actively participated in the creation of a new German Empire and an united Italy at the end of the nineteenth century. Nor was it because, like the Chinese, they surrounded themselves with a material or intellectual wall that the Jews have survived to this day; we need only look through the pages of Jewish history to find that there has been scarcely a great event in medieval or modern times, within that civilization which traces its source from the borders of the Mediterranean, in which the Jews have not taken their share, whether it was in the discovery of new worlds or the dissemination of new ideas.

In order to fairly measure the power of existence exhibited by the Jews, as well as their marvellous vitality, it is only necessary to compare them to two peoples,

both analogous to the Jews in many respects—the Phenicians and Armenians.

The Phenicians were not only of the same Semitic stock as the Jews, but, living near each other, they must have intermixed to a considerable extent. A Jew might still find a peculiar interest in reading in the scanty records about Carthage (the city founded by Phenicians in North Africa) which have come down to us from Roman writers, such names as Barca (Barak) and of those joined with that of the heathen God Baal—like Asdrubal or Hannibal, the implacable foe of Rome. Lastly, the fate of the mother-city and of its great colony recalls in its tragic character the destruction of Jerusalem; but here the bond and similarity between the Phenicians and the Jews come to an end.

The commercial genius of Tyre is acknowledged, and the greatness of Carthage, the rival of Rome for a long period, is well known, but how little lasting has been the influence of the Phenicians! The Phenicians have indeed fulfilled their purpose in the world's economy, but we know that their disappearance left no gap. The world has been better served in the work of civilizing colonization by Greeks and Romans, by Latin and Anglo-Saxon races. With the fall of Carthage there perished also the mighty Carthaginian people with its immense resources, and of all its ancient grandeur it has left us but a few relics.

The Armenians, on the other hand, whose origin dates back into a remote antiquity, have, like the Jews, preserved their individuality, in spite of very great obstacles, to the present day. There is much that is common in the political history of the Jews and Armenians. Both for a long time kept up a certain

amount of national independence in the midst of the neighbouring Empires, whose fall meant for their vassals only a change of masters. The later sad fortunes of the two people also offer many analogies. They have undergone a continual persecution at the hands of their heretical or unbelieving rulers, and both peoples have passionately clung to their religion. No States founded outside their original countries by Jews or Armenians have subsisted for any lengthy period, while by their keen intelligence they have been the means of considerably benefiting their oppressors. The Armenians, by assimilating through Christianity in a considerable measure the Jewish loyalty to an ideal, have preserved their nationality from a decadent Byzantinism, and, like a rock, they have withstood the onslaught of the waves of Mongolian hordes without being merged by them, thus serving, even if unconsciously, as a barrier of civilization.

But if we apply to the Armenians the same test as we did to the Phenicians—if we inquire into the amount of influence exercised by Armenia on the world, we shall find that, in spite of certain promising qualities undoubtedly possessed by the Armenians, their history has to this day remained a barren field. We look among them in vain for men who have stirred the world by the might of their intellect. In the thousands of years of Armenian life, there has not been produced one Armenian whom the world honours among its great sons.

To further estimate comparatively the contributions of the Phenicians, Armenians and Jews to civilization, their respective literatures may fairly be taken as an index. The literatures of Greece and Rome are the greatest glories of these peoples, and form perhaps the

most imperishable benefits which they have conferred on the human race. It might indeed be said that there has been no nation which has made a lasting impression on civilization without having produced a literature worthy of the name.

Of the Phenicians very little can be said in this respect. It is now impossible to state to what an extent Carthaginian literature flourished ; they have left us almost nothing. The little we know of their history and institutions we owe to their enemies.

The Armenians, of course, possess a literature, which has even experienced a revival in the nineteenth century, particularly through the labours of the Mechitarist monks on the island of St. Mark, near Venice, and other agencies in Edchmiadzin, Constantinople, Vienna, and Moscow. But it is just by the efforts in these centres of Armenian intellectual life that its eminently sterile, if not desolate, character becomes evident. For not only is the nature of the work of those bodies very limited, but even their contribution to the sum total of our knowledge of Armenia itself is very disappointing. For a critical knowledge of old Armenian literature, which forms a large part of their literary output, we have to go to French and German scholars. If I add that even the Mechitarist order at St. Mark, which has been the principal factor in the revival of Armenian letters, owes its existence to heretical Roman Catholicism, it will be seen how slight the merit of the Armenians is in this respect. Armenian literature, whether ecclesiastical or secular, is conspicuously poor. An example may be taken from a field in which learned Armenians have shown themselves most proficient. I refer to Armenian historical literature. Its greatest achievement is

the first history of Armenia, written by Moses of Chorene in the fifth century, a ponderous compilation of a not particularly high order. This production has hitherto not been superseded ; and the most modern histories of Armenia are still of the same uncritical and primitive, if of a more slender, kind.

The Jews, on the other hand, are essentially what Mohammed termed " the People of the Book." In spite of their conquest of Palestine, the Maccabean victories and the heroic struggle with the Romans, the Jews do not stand out as a martial people. Whenever they fought, in their later national wars, it was for a higher cause than even patriotism mostly affords, and if they have conquered the world, it was not by the sword, but by their ideas, by " the spirit of the Lord," as the prophets have it. It is, therefore, in the mind or literature of the Jews that we have to seek for their victories. It is so rich and varied that few have mastered it in all its aspects. Its age carries us from remote antiquity into our own day. Before Homer appeared in Greece, the Hebrews already possessed a literature, and prior to the time of Herodotus, " the father of history," the life of Israel had already found its chroniclers. In ancient as well as in medieval times, the Jews have ever been active and creative, and by its union in the eighteenth century with a new-born civilization, the Jewish intellect has acquired renewed strength, and has developed into one of the great living forces of our age.

With the writings that are collected in the Bible, the Book, as the civilized world calls it, everybody is more or less acquainted, though it is not yet sufficiently appreciated for one of its great distinctions—nobility of diction,

Unlike the hieroglyphics or Sanskrit, which are studied for their antiquarian or philological value, or even the Greek and Roman literatures, which have so enormously contributed to our modern civilization, the Hebrew Bible is not the property of the select. In every country, in every clime, and among all races its words are a mighty influence; it is diligently read by all classes—in the prince's palace and in the peasant's hut. There are few phases of human life which, directly or indirectly, have not been shaped by the Bible—whether it be politics and social life, literature, music or painting. Great nations have had their language fixed and beautified by a translation of the Hebrew Book, and many peoples owe to it the beginnings of their literatures. The earlier history of the Jewish people is better known than that of any other nation, and to countless millions that comprises their whole range of historical knowledge. The heroes and prophets of the Jews have become the master minds of the world, and it has learned to find in their teachings the words of the living God.

Had the Jews disappeared two thousand years ago, the biblical writings would have constituted a force which would have been sufficient to keep the memory of the Jews in the mind of the world, but, though a very important, the Bible is only a small part of their literature. The value of the Jewish Apocrypha is being more and more appreciated; the New Testament is, in substance, a Jewish, if heretical, production, and the Talmud is an ocean, which, in spite of a vast amount of labour, is still to a large extent unexplored, and harbours many potentialities to the historian, archaeologist and student of religion.

This is not the place to enlarge upon the medieval

and modern literature of the Jews, but its importance is not the less because it is not so well known as the more ancient portion. Beginning with Chaldaic and Greek, it has been written in almost all the languages of civilization. Hebrew has indeed retained an honoured place, even experiencing its golden age in medieval Spain and a revival in the nineteenth century, but the Jews have invariably written in the tongue of the land where they lived, for they liked to regard themselves as an integral part of their surroundings. There is no European language of any importance to which the Jews have not added their share, but the chief medium of the literature of the Jews has in the Middle Ages been Arabic, and in modern times German. The wealth and variety of their medieval culture, and their accompanying unique work as the interpreters and intermediaries between East and West, can only be appreciated by a perusal of writings on the subject by competent authorities. Of their achievements in the German language the Jews may indeed be proud. There is scarcely a phase of the rich intellectual life of Germany during the nineteenth century to which Jews have not made an appreciable contribution.

In the term "Jewish Literature" we should include not merely those writings which apply to the narrower circle of Jews, but every literary production that is the fruit of a Jewish mind—whether it be the scientific work of Maimonides in Arabic, the philosophical treatises of Spinoza in Latin, or the poems of Heine in German. So wide and varied has been this sphere that even in such an unexpected quarter as Christian literature we meet with Jewish writers, who, like Neander, have left their mark on Christian thought.

Independently therefore, of its unequalled religious influence, the Jewish people looms large in the realm of thought, while also in the social, not less than in the intellectual, world, Jews have played a conspicuous part. The great conflicting forces of our modern civilization, Capital and Labour, have both found amongst the Jews some of their most powerful representatives: on the one side, the Rothschilds and other kings of finance, and, then, Karl Marx and Ferdinand Lassalle, modern prophets of the ideal social order which was proclaimed by some of their Hebrew ancestors over twenty-five centuries ago.

The cause and profound significance underlying this perpetual vitality of the Jews has been well expressed by Goethe. The great test of the value of a people seemed to him to be its power of life:—"At the ethnic judgment seat of the God of Nations, it is not asked whether it is the best, the most excellent nation, but only whether it lasts, whether it has maintained itself." He saw few virtues in the Jewish people but acknowledged that "in independence, steadfastness, and valour, and, when all this would not prove sufficient, in tenacity, it has no match. It is the most persevering nation in the world. It is, it was and will be to glorify the name of Jehovah throughout all time."¹

It is this unfaltering faithfulness to God, which the Jews presented under the greatest trials and temptations, their steadfast adherence to what they considered to be the Truth, and the recognition of their indebtedness to the past as well as to the present and the future, that stamp the unique position of Israel in the world.

¹ Goethe, *Wilhelm Meister's Wanderjahre*, 2tesBuch, 2tes Kapitel.

There is a continuity of life and faith in Judaism, to which no other religion can lay claim. The Bible, the Book of Religion, is, after all a Jewish production,¹ and Judaism, say in modern Germany, is a reflex of it as it existed in old-time Babylonia. The same emotions and problems which agitated the Jewish prophets and psalmists vibrate through the hearts of all men of every clime and colour, but they touch the Jewish soul with the special force and charm which is the result of a direct and conscious inheritance of a glorious past. Here the long-promised and now partially fulfilled past engenders the future, and becomes its pledge: "This is My covenant with them, saith the Lord: My spirit that is upon thee, and My words which I have put in thy mouth, shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy seed, nor out of the mouth of thy seed's seed, saith the Lord, from henceforth and for ever."²

¹ The Bible is an admirable illustration how the Jewish mind can be universalistic without ceasing to be Jewish—intensely Jewish and yet intensely universalistic.

² Isa, lix, 21.

CHAPTER III

“ YE ARE MY WITNESSES ”

‘ Γένεσθε μοι μάρτυρες καὶ ἐγὼ μάρτυς, λέγει κύριος ὁ θεός. ’—
Isaiah xliii. 10 (LXX).

“ הַאֲנִי אִשְׁבִּיר וְלֹא אֹלֵיד יֹאמַר הַ ”—
Isa. lxvi. 9.

IF we review the long course of Jewish history, we shall easily observe that the feature which we have already seen ascribed to it at a very early age,¹ has ever remained dominant. Throughout the ages, the Jews have been a protesting body, a minority against a majority, facing the world with ideas and ideals running counter to those current and conventional, but, at the same time, in spite of every obstacle, gaining ground, and conquering “strong nations afar off.”

This protesting trait became so engraven in their character that it was ascribed by them to their forefather Abraham, who had to adopt it as the first condition of showing himself worthy to become the progenitor of the Jewish people, and, through it, a source of blessing to the world.² The earliest and most powerful manifestation of this national spirit was produced by the Hebrew *nebiim* (prophets). There is perhaps no more pathetic fight for truth than the one

¹ “For all the peoples will walk every one in the name of his god, and we will walk in the name of the Lord our God for ever and ever” (*Micah* iv. 5; cf. *supra*, p. 3).

² *Gen.* xii. 1-3.

by Elijah, the champion of the Lord God of Israel, against Baal and his priests. The victory of Elijah over the priests of Baal might not at first seem momentous, but the victory of heathenism then, would, humanly speaking, have obscured for a long time the light of ethical Monotheism. The Israelites seem to have almost instinctively grasped the immeasurable importance of this contest, and the impression then produced on them has never been effaced. It is indeed appropriate that this powerful figure of early Jewish history should be represented by Jewish mysticism as being present in spirit at the initiation of a child in the covenant of Abraham, for there could have been no finer symbol of the future loyalty of the young Israelite to the God of his fathers. Not less significant was it that Elijah should have been designated by Jewish hope as the forerunner of humanity's golden age: it seems to have been felt that only one who was as true to his higher self as he was could be its harbinger.

If the name of Elijah is so closely intertwined with Jewish life, it is because his people became the Elijah of the world. Elijah was the type of his people; what Elijah was to Israel, Israel has been to the world. Like that prophet, Israel has fought, and is fighting, against overwhelming odds, against the mighty of the earth, the good fight of truth.

Like Elijah, Israel has had frequent reason to bitterly lament as the explanation of his misfortunes: "I have been very jealous for the Lord God of hosts" because they "have thrown down Thine altars and slain Thy prophets with the sword; and I, even I only, am left, and they seek my life to take it away." And again, like to Elijah, also to Israel, came God in the still small

voice, telling it that it has still a purpose to fulfil, and not to despair in the ultimate victory of its cause, for there are yet left very many who have not bowed their knees unto Baal.¹

So throughout Jewish history. Whenever there was the alternative of truth and persecution unto death to error and honours, the overwhelming bulk of the Jewish people has unhesitatingly chosen the former. If other peoples or religions have not had so many opportunities of testing the strength of their faith in a higher power, it was because they never as unflinchingly and consistently preserved the same loyalty to it. When the Greek came into touch with the Jewish mind, the unavoidable antagonism soon broke out into a flame, and it became a question whether the Jews, like so many other Asiatic peoples, would also be consumed by the fire of the Greek intellect. But it failed in the case of the Jews. Even when Antiochus Epiphanes backed his proselytizing efforts with the might of the Seleucid Empire, when he became the first in the long dynasty of Jewish persecutors, Judaism not only withstood the storm, but ultimately triumphed. In the words of Graetz we may say that the Jewish people victoriously overcame this first temptation, and with the blood of its martyrs sealed its covenant with God and His Law.²

The events of the Maccabean times produced a lesson for all ages. Not only to the Jews does the Maccabean victory teach by its annual commemoration, the Feast of Hanucah, that, because of their faithfulness to God, He delivered “the strong into the hands of the weak, the many into the hands of the few,” as the

¹ 1 Kings xix.

² *Gesch. der Juden*, vol. ii, part ii, p. 316.

Jewish Prayer-Book has it, but the Christian martyrs have found in these Jewish witnesses to the truth an example for their own sufferings and trials of faith. The three martyr scenes in the book of Daniel were those which most visibly encouraged the early Christians. In the catacombs and in the ancient usages of the Eastern Church the story of the three youths was repeated over and over again; the martyr Eleazar was honoured in the ancient Church as the proto-martyr, and he, together with the mother and her seven sons, were converted into Christian martyrs and saints, the Sancti Maccabæi.¹ The struggle of the Jews against Antiochus Epiphanes is the first instance of a people which fought solely for its spiritual possessions. The pure and heroic spirit of martyrdom then engendered was not only first produced by the Jews, but they themselves have personified it in an unique manner. "If there be an ascending scale of sufferings," said Zunz, "Israel reached its highest degree. If the duration of afflictions, and the patience with which they are borne, confer nobility upon men, the Jews may vie with the aristocracy of any country. If a literature which owns a few classical tragedies is deemed rich, what place should be assigned to a tragedy which extends over fifteen centuries, and which has been composed and enacted by the heroes themselves?"²

¹ This characteristic anachronism is capped by the usual accompaniment of a saint's day, which happens to be in this case on August 1, and naturally, also, of relics, which are now exhibited in Rome. Cf. Stanley, *Jewish Church*, ii, pp. 35, 36, 300; Max Maus, "Die Maccabæer als Christliche Heilige," in *Monatschrift für Geschichte und Wissenschaft d. Judenthums*, 1900, p. 147.

² *Die Synagogale Poesie*, ch. ii, "Leiden." The translation here is by Dr. A. Löwy, and the passage is quoted by George Eliot in *Daniel Deronda*, at the head of chapter xlii.

The attempt of Antiochus Epiphanes was not repeated by the heathen Romans, who did not indulge in purely religious persecution. The religious and political development of the Roman Empire brought, however, a new element into the field. The long constancy of the Jews among a heathen world at length produced its fruit—Judaism gave birth to Christianity. This new religion not only assimilated the Jewish sense of loyalty to God, but added to it the theory—which was put into practice at the earliest possible opportunity—that those who were not for Christianity were against it. In short, the non-Christian came to be considered as an enemy to God and man, and, whilst it was expected that the unbeliever would certainly be eternally punished in the next world, the Christian felt it his duty to convert him to the true religion, and, if due admonition should prove ineffectual, to oppress, persecute, nay, to exterminate him. It is true that the Christian heretic suffered as much, if not even more, than the unbeliever, but heresy was at all times a rather loose term in the Christian Church, the word being generally applied by the stronger to the weaker party. As, besides, both of them had a firm belief in the duty of religious coercion, only the necessary power was wanted to turn the persecuted into persecutors. The Jews, however, formed everywhere a small minority, with no material power to defend themselves against the Christian majority. Those who have studied the quarrels of the Christian sects are aware how little the claims of humanity weighed against the dictates of religious passions, and it can readily be imagined that the unbelieving Jews were certainly not treated with any particular tenderness. Historic events helped to give the antagonism between Judaism and

Christianity an additional bitter feeling. As soon as Christianity gained the secular power in the Roman Empire by the adhesion of Constantine, the Jews were subjected to a series of harassing laws, which were intended to make life unbearable to them, where exile or death did not become the penalty of Judaism. There is, indeed, very little in the conduct of Jesus and his apostles towards their people to warrant its being persecuted by their followers, but it must be stated as a noteworthy fact that it was the exponents of the Christian faith, the clergy, with the Bishops at their head, who were invariably the instigators of Jewish persecutions.¹ We have many instances where the Jews have lived in intimate social relations with their non-Jewish neighbours, until these teachers of the religion of Christ preached their gospel of hatred.²

“It would be a terrible and thankless task,” says a Christian historian, speaking of the sufferings of the medieval Jews, “to collect the testimonies of centuries of bigotry, barbarity, avarice and superstition of both the rulers and the people, and the unexampled power of resistance, perseverance, and courageous sacrifice of the Jews, who suffered persecutions with the same energy with which they once opposed the Romans, and yet retained their vitality. There is no interest to pursue the same monotonous tale of atrocities committed by the whole Christian world, by people and priests; the same accusations, the same cruelties, the same heroism.”³

¹ M. L. Schleiden, *Die Romantik des Martyriums bei den Juden im Mittelalter*, p. 18.

² Zunz, *Die Syn. Poesie*, pp. 10, 11; Döllinger, *Studies in European History* (the Jews in Europe), p. 216; Stobbe, *Die Juden in Deutschland*, p. 4.

³ Stobbe, *ibid.*, pp. 181, 2.

We have only to take a short survey of the history of Jewish martyrdom to recognize the truth of these words. The Church vied with the Christian State in devising new restrictions to be imposed on the hapless Jews. With the adoption of Christianity in any country, the exercise of Judaism was beset with every possible hindrance and restriction, and the highest conceivable punishment was provided against the spread of that religion beyond the pale of its professors. The Jews could not hold any office in the State, they were forbidden to intermarry, and even to eat, with Christians,¹ or to possess Christian servants. The Jews could acquire no landed property ; all the honourable trades were gradually closed to them, and the Christian guilds were the means of excluding them from handicrafts. When, with the crusades, the Europeans came into personal touch with the East, associations of Christian merchants were founded, and the Jews were excluded from the commerce between Europe and Asia, in which they had taken so prominent and useful a part. One calling only the Church permitted the Jews—money-lending. By a stupid, but gigantic, mistake in the interpretation of a biblical text, the Church forbade the faithful to lend money at interest, and, as the Jews were not considered to be within the pale of salvation, and the supposed Christian precept was quite impracticable, the Jews received the monopoly of money-lending. In this connexion it should always be remembered that the Jews as money-lenders were in the Middle Ages

¹ It will be observed that in the social relations between the Jew and the Christian, Christianity was more exclusive than Judaism, as restrictive laws in this respect would else have had no justification.

not only an indispensable, but even a beneficial, element of the population.¹ To the Jews, however, money-lending became a curse by the notoriously evil effects on character produced by that calling. Then the pitiless extortions of Kaiser and king, down to the pettiest official, forced the Jews to take exorbitant rates of interest, though the Lombardian money-lenders showed later on that Christians, albeit more favourably placed, could demand an even higher percentage than Jews. It did not seem to have been considered wrong to rob a Jew; even a Christian saint like Louis IX (and he certainly has a better right to this title than many of his fellow-saints) did not disdain to force money out of Jews by imprisoning them, but, evidently not satisfied with this, he confiscated all their possessions and hunted them out of his kingdom. The Jews were purposely deprived of every human right, and declared beyond the pale of the law, so that they had to pay for so-called protection, and even for bare justice.²

The German Emperors, owing to being frequently called upon to give the Jews some protection, of course for a consideration, declared by a bold fiction that the Jews were their serfs (*Kammerknechte*), and were bound to pay a special tax to them. Indeed, the protection of Jews became so lucrative that, when they found life unbearable and decided to emigrate, they were frequently held back by force; nay, sometimes when

¹ Döllinger, *ibid.*, p. 228; Hallam (*Middle Ages*, iii, p. 337) calls usury, or lending money for profit, "one of the most useful and legitimate branches of commerce."

² Referring to the extortion of money from the Jews for every common right of mankind, Hallam says: "It is almost incredible to what a length this was carried" (*Middle Ages*, i, p. 209; ii, p. 320).

they had fled into another principality, their extradition was demanded. They were such a valuable commodity that an Emperor would often present a number of Jews to princes or cities he wished to reward.¹

If it was not found possible to exterminate the Jews physically, no effort was left untried to degrade them morally. “ The Jew was to be avoided as one that is plague stricken, whose breath is infectious.”² The people were robbed of any sympathy that they might have felt for the Jews as fellow-men ; they were taught to regard them as belonging to Satan. With fear and hatred was ultimately mixed contempt for beings whom the populace saw degraded and held up to opprobrium by the highest and wisest in the land. Every calamity, every unexplained misfortune, was imputed by the ignorant and superstitious people to the Jews, and the mysterious horror with which they had been inculcated to regard them gave rise to unspeakable tragedies. The Jews were charged with being the authors of plagues, with poisoning the wells, with the profanation of the host and the murder of Christian children for ritual purposes—an infamous charge which is still spread by anti-Jewish agitators, both lay and clerical, in the twentieth Christian century. Upon the slightest pretext, Jewish homes were wrecked, Jews murdered, and often whole Jewish communities swept away by the desperate fury of frenzied mobs. Oppressed and degraded, distinguished from other human beings by an obligatory badge on their clothes, which

¹ In the Golden Bull of Charles IV in 1356, the Emperor characteristically granted to certain princes all the mines of gold and other metals in their territories, as well as the permission to hold Jews (Stobbe, *ibid.*, p. 25).

² Döllinger, *ibid.*, p. 217.

made the Jews the butt of all the brutalities of which the high and low rabble were capable, it may indeed be said that "it is scarcely possible to imagine a more painful existence than that of a Jew in the Middle Ages."¹

The frequent wholesale expulsions and murders, the unmentionable dark deeds and horrors of the Church's Inquisition, the countless *autos-da-fé*, the many laws and customs of bestial brutality under which the Jews suffered, are too sad to recount. The aspect of their tormentors, fanatical hordes clad in religious rags, is too painful a sight.²

Naturally, life would have been wellnigh impossible if the hardships which the Jews had to undergo had not been mitigated by that ineradicable human feeling of one fellow-being for another, which is rarely totally absent in man. Of those obscure individuals who generously helped the Jews in their time of distress, history has left us no record, but we have the names of many princes, Popes and Bishops, who stayed the hand of the persecutor, or at least lessened the horrors of an exile or massacre. Several Popes have indeed distinguished themselves in this respect, and a name like St. Bernard of Clairvaux will never fade from Jewish memory. But, as has been well pointed out, "whereas in other matters, even the most trifling, ban, interdict, inquisition, and other drastic measures were threatened and employed, bulls to protect the Jews never went beyond

¹ Döllinger, *ibid.*, p. 237.

² The spirit of the crusaders is typical. On their passage to the conquest of the sepulchre of Jesus they exterminated the Jewish communities along their route, and when they at last entered Jerusalem, they drove all the Jews there into a synagogue and then burned them alive.

general exhortation ; the general sanction was wanting.”¹ Worse still, instead of proclaiming the persecution of Jews un-Christian and inhuman, the Popes, in the spirit of the Christian historians, who related Jewish martyrdoms without a word of pity for the victims, based their letters of protection solely on the prophecy that a remnant of Israel will remain which will ultimately be saved. “ The declaration of Innocent III that the entire nation was destined by God on account of its sins to perpetual slavery, was the Magna Charta continually appealed to by those who coveted the possessions of the Jews and the earnings of their industry.”²

But this relentless persecution of unbelievers and heretics, wherever Christianity was in power, soon and unexpectedly brought its Nemesis. Judaism, which after the destruction of its national centre, had found an asylum in Arabia, was not only largely represented there, but had even built up several independent Arabian principalities. About six centuries after the rise of Christianity, Judaism again fulfilled its vocation as the mother of religions : Mohammedanism was born. Had Judaism been absent from the deserts of Arabia, Mohammed would undoubtedly have drifted into one of the many forms into which Christianity was then split ; probably into Nestorianism. The virile vigour of early Mohammedanism, which carried truth and righteousness into many dark places of the earth, would not have been produced, and the consequent regeneration of Christianity, to which the new religion furnished a strong impetus, would have been indefinitely deferred. The wonderful spread of Mohammedanism was immensely

¹ Döllinger, *ibid.*, p. 218.

² Döllinger, *ibid.*, p. 219.

facilitated by the strife of the Christian sects among themselves and their common hatred of the Jews, and although the early history of Mohammedanism was not altogether free from the stains of Jewish persecution, the Jews gladly exchanged the intolerable oppression of the Christian for the rule of the Mohammedan. If the Jews were not capable of physically resisting Christian oppression, they had power enough to become useful allies of the Mohammedans in their marvellous victories against Christianity, extending from Armenia to France, and to assist in the consolidation of this new and mighty Empire. Later on, when a noble civilization was created in Moorish Spain, the Jews claimed a large share of its work as well as of its achievements.

But whether it was in Christian or Mohammedan lands, the Jew became the persecuted "man of sorrows." He was a living protest against the national or geographical limitations of truth, and everywhere the witness to its unsubduable force.

It is true that the Jews have not been aggressive in their protest against the errors of these religions, nor have they sought by violent means to counteract them. But, with a deeper insight, we shall observe that it is not a mere want of energy and faith that has determined this seemingly passive attitude towards other forms of life and thought—nay, we shall find that Judaism has at all times presented an uncompromising opposition to the false and the evil, to the shams and idols of humanity. When the Jewish prophets and psalmists declared to their people that besides the Holy One of Israel there is no other God, and that the idols are אֱלִילִים, mere wood and stone, their words have had, in spite of the very limited circle to which they were uttered, an eternal and

far-reaching influence. The fine irony of an Isaiah is as true to-day as it was in his generation, when he recounts how out of a piece of wood the idol is fashioned by the workman, who then falls down, worships the work of his hands, and prays unto it : “ Deliver me, for thou art my God ! ” how, moreover, a part of the same wood left over he burns in the fire, “ with part thereof he eateth flesh ; he roasteth roast and is satisfied ; yea, he warmeth himself and saith, Aha, I am warm, I have seen the fire.”¹ Does not the impassioned denunciation of the Jewish prophet apply with the same force to the present age—not merely to the fetishism of savages and to the cultured idolatries of India and China, but also to the dominant religion of European peoples ? Are the words of Isaiah less applicable to actual life if we employ them in reference to Christianity with its Madonnas in the highways and byways, with its adoration of innumerable saints and of their images and icons, with its crucifixes, the Mass, the consecrated wafer and wine, and countless other devices to represent God and to satisfy the craving of man after Him ? It is only Judaism which has been, and is at the present day, the lineal descendant—not merely in the flesh, but also in the spirit—of its own prophets and martyrs ; Judaism alone has risen to the fullest and highest conception of a God, holy, immeasurable and invisible, loving justice and righteousness, hating iniquity, the source of mercy and truth, Who cannot be contained in any Temple, and Who yet lives in the human heart. “ For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy ; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive

¹ Isa. xlv.

the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones." ¹

To this transcendent truth the Jews have been living witnesses in all ages and in all climes where men have acknowledged the God of Abraham. To the majestic, but peaceful, triumph of Israel, "the servant of the Lord," ² we may well apply the words of the prophet: "He shall not cry, nor lift up, nor cause his voice to be heard in the street. A bruised reed shall he not break, and the smoking flax shall he not quench: he shall bring forth judgment unto truth. He shall not fail nor be discouraged, till he have set judgment in the earth; and the isles shall wait for his law." ³ True, the world has ever been saying of Israel: "He hath no form nor comeliness, and when we see him there is no beauty that we should desire him." ⁴ And there has indeed but too often been good cause for the lament: "Who is blind but My servant? or deaf as My messenger that I send?" ⁵ But those outside Israel, who will remember his loyalty to God, and the incalculable results of his testimony to Him amidst an unparalleled martyrdom; all those who value and rejoice in Israel's service to the cause of human faith, righteousness and freedom, will exclaim, in contemplating "the most moving drama in the history of the world": ⁶ "Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted." ⁷ To the Jew himself the word of the Lord comes with the consolation of divine tenderness: "In a little wrath I hid My face from thee for a

¹ Isa. lvii. 15. ² Ibid., xli. 8, etc. ³ Ibid., xlii. 2-4.

⁴ Ibid., liii. 2.

⁵ Ibid., xlii. 19.

⁶ Döllinger, *ibid.*, p. 211.

⁷ Isa. liii. 4.

moment ; but with everlasting kindness will I have mercy on thee, saith the Lord thy redeemer.”¹ And then the great aim and accomplishment of the “ travail of soul ” which Israel had undergone, and the fruits of which he was to see,² is declared : “ Behold, a nation that knew not thee shall run unto thee because of the Lord thy God, and for the Holy One of Israel ; for He hath glorified thee.”³

It is not only in the wide, almost all-embracing, realm of Religion and Morals that the debt to Judaism is now recognized by the world, but there is also another sphere in which its acknowledgment, “ with his stripes we are healed,”⁴ may be demanded.

To realize to some extent the service of Judaism to the cause of liberty and the freedom of the human conscience, we need only go back to a time when Europe was synonymous with Christendom, when not to be a Christian was considered to be beyond the pale of civilization, nay, unworthy of the rights of humanity. Until modern times, there was hardly to be found in Europe a solitary dissenting voice against Christianity. The Jews, the progenitors of Christianity, were for many centuries the only antagonists of its pretensions living in its midst ; they enforced as far as possible the lesson of toleration, they taught that God was also to be found outside the Church, and that charity and goodness were not bound up with a belief in the Trinity or in the fall of man. For this work the Jews felt the brunt of the hatred with which Catholicism, Greek or Roman, not less than Protestantism, met the unbeliever, the miscreant or infidel, as he was significantly

¹ Isa. liv. 8.

² Ibid., liii. 10, 11.

³ Ibid., lv. 5.

⁴ Ibid., liii. 5.

called. Through this, the Jews have borne, and to a very large extent they still bear, all the shame and suffering which power combined with malignity can inflict. It has been the destiny of Judaism, too often unconsciously and unrecognized, to be the bulwark of truth against error, of conviction against mere submissive belief. Even the truth of its own position does not alter this fact. The Jews, unaided and despised, have fought for over two thousand years, and are still fighting, the battles of the human conscience, not with the might of the flesh, but with that of the spirit. Judaism, with a power not put forth by any other agency, has demonstrated the transcendent and unconquerable force of a great living idea, which has furnished a beautiful unity and unique strength of resistance to an hundred generations. To the potency of this idea no other religious system, largely created and living by the sword and social coercion, is in a position to testify ; it is pre-eminently the mission of Judaism to be the bearer of this message to the human race.

CHAPTER IV

THE TREE OF LIFE

“ Whom have I in heaven but Thee ? and there is none upon earth that I desire beside Thee. My flesh and my heart faileth : but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever.”—*Psalm lxxiii.* 25, 26.

WHATEVER may have been the various causes of the barbarities that have been directed against the Jews, there was one common basis underlying all Jewish persecutions. “ In all countries,” says a Christian historian already cited, “ when fanaticism was aroused, often the only choice left to the Jews lay between conversion and the most terrible tortures of death. Even if in many persecutions the real motives were avarice and other low passions, the banner of Christianity was always raised aloft. It was in the name of the Lord, in order to spread the worship of Christ and to punish the traitors to the Christian faith, that these atrocities were pretended to have been enacted.”¹ Throughout the ages, in modern Russia no less than in medieval Spain and the old Byzantine Empire, the great comprehensive crime of the Jews has been their religion, and all their shortcomings, real and alleged, could have been expiated by the abjuration of their creed. It cannot be said that there was an unwillingness on the part of the Church to instruct the Jew and to show him the error of his

¹ Stobbe, *Die Juden in Deutschland*, p. 164.

ways. Nor was there any possible encouragement wanting to smooth the path of the would-be convert. Everything was done to make visible to him the material blessings that followed upon the profession of Christianity. It is true that human nature, being what it is, could not help making the average Christian distrustful of the Jew who evidently made a virtue of necessity or whose conversion was followed by tangible advantages, but the Church has done its utmost to gather "the lost sheep of the House of Israel" into its fold. With all the manifold means at its disposal, Christianity has left nothing untried to win the Jews over to its side. When all the terrors which the State could apply in the supposed service of religion were exhausted, the Church stepped in with instruments of its own. The Inquisition, that Moloch to whom Christianity has offered countless Jewish sacrifices, and which in its devotion was almost itself swallowed by the insatiable monster, is the most comprehensive agency by which the Church sought to save Jewish souls. The means adopted towards this end, and the manner in which they have been applied, form an instructive measure of the secularization of the civil power, and the consequent proportionate weakening of ecclesiastical authority. There has not, indeed, been a revolution of ideas within the Church itself as to the justifiability of coercion in matters of religion; Greek Catholicism in Russia is as bigoted as the Government of that country, and Roman Catholicism allies itself with anti-Jewish movements where it aspires to undisputed sway. But the methods which once shone with the splendour of tragic ferocity have, in many instances, through force of circumstances, sunk to a commonplace materi-

alization of religion or to attempts bearing marks of ludicrous senility. All the same, efforts to win the Jews over to Christianity are unintermittingly being made, in the most unscrupulous manner as to the means employed. The deprivation of political and civil rights is still to-day used towards the great majority of the Jewish people as sticks to drive them into the Christian fold. Where the State does not make itself the guardian of the Christian faith, or where, by legal and illegal methods, it does not use the honours and offices at its disposal as baits for Jewish souls, missionary organizations are being maintained, which, with vast resources at their command, seek to obtain the same results by means which are despicable where they are not immoral. If by this incessant attack on the Jewish citadel, with weapons ranging from wholesale massacre and robbery to a deluge of silly tracts, it was intended to bring about the gradual annihilation of Judaism, it is not necessary to demonstrate how futile the effort has been. All forms of coercion have been fully tried, and the result cannot but be pronounced a failure. In the mighty contest between Judaism, supported solely by the spirit of its inner consciousness, and Christianity, commanding and utilizing to an enormous extent all the forces of social life, Judaism has come forth triumphant.

If we, however, ask the question: "Why has the Synagogue been triumphant?" we are faced by the problem as to what were the elements which constituted the life-giving force in Judaism. It may be said that they were both internal and external; on the one side there was a hostile world, hostile both in thought and action, and on the other the warm sunshine of community of sentiment and brotherly feeling. But a

deeper investigation into the subject will bring out more clearly the relative importance of the various elements and their ramifications, and it will be found that, whatever were the causes which contributed to the vitality of the Jewish people both in its physical and spiritual aspects, it was the Torah, the religion of Israel, which was the great source of strength—the Torah, the incorporation of that wisdom of which an old Jewish thinker has truly said: “It is a tree of life to them that hold fast to it, and all its supporters are rendered happy.”

Persecution, hostility from without, has undoubtedly had a certain determining influence on Jewish life. On a considerable number of Jews the physically unequal struggle between Judaism and Christianity has had a disastrous effect. The advantage of the very easy transition from an oppressed and weak minority into a ruling and all-powerful majority, which conversion to Christianity at all times offered, was evident to all, and made use of by not a few. But it is now some time that it has gradually become recognized that, since the memorable occasion when a ruler of Egypt began his attempts to counteract the growing numbers of the children of Israel by making their lives “bitter with hard bondage,” the action of the Pharaohs of all ages has led to the same result: “the more they afflicted them, the more they multiplied and grew.” The case of the Jews in this respect is indeed but a proof of the general futility of religious persecutions; the object for which they are instituted often defeats its own end if they are applied to a spirited body, and they then have the effect contrary to that intended, by consolidating and intensifying the mass of the persecuted.

While this may almost be laid down as an axiom, it cannot be claimed that persecution has always had the same effect when it has been exercised on other monotheistic religions. Christianity in itself supplies the evidence that the storm of persecution may very frequently work with fatal results. Had the Christians of Asia and Africa not lacked conviction in their religious profession, or had they possessed in their faith a strong moral support against the attacks of Mohammedanism, this religion could never at its first onslaught have so irrevocably appropriated those vast tracts which once formed the richest possessions of Christianity. It is astonishing with what comparatively slight pressure the Mohammedans had in about a century, annihilated some of the numerically greatest sections of Christendom. Spain, which in its heathen state was able to hold out against the Romans for hundreds of years, was, as a Christian country, conquered by the Mohammedans in one decisive battle.

If the rough wind which blew from Mohammedanism uprooted and destroyed the Christian Churches within its reach, the same phenomena were repeated within the inner circle of Christianity itself. The internecine struggles of the Christian sects were invariably decided by the secular arm of the more powerful party. Arianism, whose strength rivalled, if it did not at times exceed, that of the Trinitarian or Catholic Churches, was extinguished by persecution and the sword. This, as a matter of fact, became the method of keeping the Churches free from heretics, or of subduing them. It was the arm of the flesh, not the Holy Spirit, which crushed the innumerable Christian sects of the first four or five centuries into one mould. The same process was also

adopted later on when the protesting spirit arose in Europe, and, there again, coercion proved the most efficacious instrument of destruction. Where the sword was not capable of successfully defending a cause, there it perished. Protestantism was thus rooted out of the Catholic dominions, and Catholicism out of the Protestant countries.

If we are to assess the value of the moral forces possessed by Judaism and Christianity at the same rate, it is only logical to assume that Judaism must long ago have been completely banished from the realms of Christianity and Mohammedanism, particularly as the material power and auxiliary assistance by which Christianity and Mohammedanism, as well as the various militant Christian sects, were always backed, were absolutely wanting to Judaism. But the miraculous effects which persecutions have had on the vitality of Judaism, nay, their frequently bracing results, have been often considered without regard to the inner strength of Judaism, and it has, therefore, been erroneously assumed in some quarters that persecution was the agency by which the blood of Judaism was kept in circulation. With such an opinion, a large number of Christian theologians, too tolerant and generous to advocate oppression, and too rational to rely on certain stereotyped misinterpretations of biblical texts, have wearily resigned themselves to the complacent hope that Judaism would gradually succumb if no material opposition were offered to it. But such a view takes no account either of Jewish history or of the nature of Judaism. That freedom of development and unreserved acceptance of the highest culture of the time is not injurious to the interests of Judaism is amply proved by the fact that the most

flourishing epochs of Judaism have been worked out under free conditions. Jewish life in ancient Alexandria and Babylonia, or in medieval Spain, furnishes evidence that Judaism needs not the aid of compressive appliances in order to maintain a vigorous state of health. It is, of course, true that adversities generally prove as trusty a means of fortifying the character of a religion as that of its individual professors, and that, as has already been pointed out, the feeling of Jewish solidarity was actually intensified by outside pressure. But, apart from the fact that the consciousness of Judaism has been steeled by this process, the intrinsic strength of that religion is alone sufficiently capable of maintaining its position without the least coercive support. Wherever a small number of Jews meet, whether it be on the ice-fields of Canada or the mining-camps of South Africa, there a nucleus of a Jewish congregation for the purpose of worship and benevolence is formed. The unrestricted freedom they enjoy, the diversity of nationality, station, speech and thought, the materialistic atmosphere, the pecuniary and moral sacrifices they are called upon to make, prove no bar to the purely voluntary grouping of Jews for an ideal object.

The spontaneity with which the Jews ever clung to their religion is a fact which may perhaps to a great extent be explained by the spontaneous manner in which that religion grew into being. It is the distinction of Judaism to stand unique as a world-religion, both by reason of the mode in which it has evolved from the hearts and minds of its adherents, and by its endeavour to bridge the gulf between the human and the divine, the mortal and the eternal. The Jews do not owe their faith to chance or to outside influences. The religion

of Israel has been created, it might almost be said, out of Israel itself. It was by a long process which has taken place within its own history, by sufferings and trials, in which it has always seen the hand of God, that Judaism developed. It is now being more and more recognized that the Hebrew prophets were not merely the mechanical mouthpieces of a higher Power, but that they were endowed with warm hearts and sympathies for their own people and the world outside it. The Jewish prophets were not mere seers, foretellers of the future, but, what their name נביא denotes: preachers, proclaimers of the Divine Will; they were in the highest sense patriots, politicians, reformers, who were bent upon impressing a spirit of righteousness on their people. To the prophets, who did not form a distinct hierarchic or aristocratic caste, but were found in all stations of life, the people responded out of its own free will. The discourse addressed to the Israelites calling upon them to choose between "life and good and death and evil,"¹ was a reality pregnant with mighty consequences. The free choice was "life and good." In spite of the many temptations which the Israelites had to merge into the idolatry and sensuous worship surrounding them, they rallied again and again round those leaders who upheld an exceptionally lofty ethical and spiritual conception of the divine and human elements of religion. From what we can judge from the history of Elijah and subsequent events in the life of pre-exilic Israel, those who remained faithful to the Lord God of Israel against the wishes and efforts of the numerous princes who were zealous for the introduction of heathen deities and customs, must already in early

¹ Deut. xxx. 15 fig.

times have frequently been forced to conform to their king's commands, even at the penalty of death. The religion of Israel thus existed by its own strength, and its further development was the expression of a people's conviction. Like the prophets, their successors, the Rabbis, were an integral part of the people; they formed a circle to which everybody who devoted himself to the study of the Torah and carried out its precepts had access. Nor was this learning the property of the few, or the esoteric doctrine of scholars. It was the bounden duty of every Israelite to study the Torah, though at the same time it was expressly declared that the study of the Torah without an accompanying occupation would lead to sin.¹ Unlike the Christian priest, with his claim to power from heaven to bind and to loose, the official or professional Rabbi was a savant, a teacher, the freely elected head of his community. As a matter of fact, there is no office of priest in medieval and modern Judaism. Every Jew, without distinction, possessing the necessary moral and intellectual qualities, is entitled to perform the ritual requirements of the Jewish religion.² If we, therefore, speak of Rabbinical Judaism, we have to remember that it is not the product of a priestly caste, but, so far as the designation has at all a meaning, it is the most democratically constituted creed, indeed the only monotheistic religion

¹ Aboth, ii. 2. Cf. the saying of Rabban Gamaliel.

² It is only during the last few centuries, when, owing to various causes, the official Rabbis have tended to become a professional body, that the custom of conferring rabbinical diplomas came into vogue, but this was done more with the view of checking abuses than to confer any special powers. Among the Karaites, the ecclesiastical functionary is still to the present day only a learned artisan or trader.

which has been developed purely from within. "The history of Israel from Moses downwards," said Dean Stanley, "is not the history of an inspired book or an inspired order, but of an inspired people."¹

A passionate attachment to the Torah and unfaltering trust in God's guidance became, since the Babylonian captivity, the most marked Jewish characteristics. They were adhered to in the face of the most discouraging obstacles and adverse influences, so that there was an appropriate significance in the words of the prophet: "Thus saith the Lord, I remember thee, the kindness of thy youth, the love of thine espousals; how thou wentest after Me in the wilderness, in a land that was not sown."² The historic religion of Israel is not merely the "fear of the Lord," but pre-eminently "a hope in the Lord"; it is the expression, continually emphasized, of Israel's unswerving confidence in the divine and beneficent government of the world. "Thou lovest all things that are," runs a Jewish meditation, "and abhorrest nothing which Thou hast made: for never wouldest Thou have made anything, if Thou hadst hated it. And how could any thing have existed if it had not been Thy will, or been preserved if not called by Thee! But Thou sparest all, for they are Thine, O Lord, Thou lover of souls."³ With such a conception of "the lover of souls," the relations of man with God become personal, intimate, tender; hope grows into an unquestioning certainty in the immeasurable love of the Most High for His creatures. Under His all-powerful guidance and protection, man feels that whatever might befall him, the Eternal is an unfailing source of life and joy; at the

¹ *Jewish Church*, i, p. 136.

² Jer. ii. 2

³ *Wisd. of Sol.* xi. 24-26.

moment of the deepest anguish and utter loss of all hope, one thought emerges triumphant from the Jewish heart: "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for Thou art with me." ¹

We thus find that the Jewish idea of God possesses on the one hand the rational spirituality of that elaborated by the best Greek minds, and on the other that touching intimacy of relationship with the Deity that may particularly be met with in medieval Christianity. But these two aspects, blended in Judaism, appear without the cold detachment of the pagan and the superstitious idolatry of the Christian. This is the oldest and greatest inheritance of the religion of Israel, which has been jealously kept intact and unimpaired to the present day and has been enriched by the experience, and intensified by the conviction, of ages. Various hypotheses have been unsuccessfully advanced as to the origin of ethical Monotheism in Israel, but equally important and more profitable is the consideration how this fundamental basis of Judaism has been maintained in its pristine purity, and unpolluted amidst unclean surroundings.

Whenever corruption is detected in religions like Buddhism or Christianity, the purity of the faith is sought at its source. However degraded modern Buddhism may be, its present professors and its many European admirers claim an unsurpassed grandeur for the religion as it was originally enunciated by the Buddha. It is likewise the case with those Christians who are trying to fashion their faith according to the words of Christ, instead of taking the misinterpretations of his apostles or the rapidly growing corruptions of the

¹ Ps. xxiii. 4.

first few centuries as the exact form of his religion. In a comparison which may be instituted between Judaism, Buddhism and Christianity, in so far as it relates to the most fundamental and vital part of their systems—their conception of God—it will be found that, while Judaism has undoubtedly preserved its ethical Monotheism unchanged through all time, the original Monotheism of Buddhism and Christianity has been woefully marred by the dicta of priests and theologians and the decisions of Emperor and Councils; the Divinity set up has been overlaid and transformed beyond recognition by idolatrous excrescences.

If we seek for the cause of the different effects of time on these religions, we shall very probably find it in the attitude which they assumed in their early age towards the divine and human elements of religion. It is the happy mean which, like in less important matters, becomes also the saving equilibrium between the two contending forces of materialism and spiritualism claiming man's allegiance. It is essential for the healthy condition of a religion that these two aspects should be equally and evenly represented, neither trenching upon the other's ground. Yet this balance is constantly endangered by the strong tendency on the one side to confine itself to things earthly, and the temptation on the other side to throw off the restraints and shackles imposed by this tendency, and to roam in the undefinable domain of spiritualism. The most memorable and far-reaching conflict between the two phases occurred within Judaism, and ultimately led to the establishment of Christianity. It is Paul who brought the whole question to an issue, by not only warning against the evil effects of an excessive ceremonialism in religion—

which had been done long before him, and formed a theme of denunciation by Jewish teachers at the very time of his activity—but by declaring that the very existence of ceremonial observances led to sin. In the new dispensation which he proclaimed there were to be no ritual ordinances fettering the believer. This theory became a battle cry of the Church against the Synagogue. But what has been the result in practice? We can see this in the Greek and Oriental Churches which arose out of the labours of Paul and his successors. In these Churches, in which Paul and his collaborators have been idolized, opposition to ritualism is not merely resented but branded as a deadly heresy, as a treason against the religion of Christ. In the Greek Churches planted by Paul, and in the ecclesiastical kingdoms of the East, there exists an idolatry, which is expressed in the lowest form of ceremonialism mixed with sorcery. “For ninety-nine per cent. of these Christians,” says Harnack, “religion exists only as a ceremonious ritual, in which it is externalized.”¹ Nay, even in the remaining one per cent. of Oriental and Greek Christianity, Harnack still finds the same ritualism regarded as an absolute necessity, without which Christian doctrine could not receive its proper application and obtain its due results. It would be difficult to conceive a more complete reversal of the fundamental idea of a teacher by followers who still maintain an unabated reverence for his words, and this surprising result becomes especially significant if, as in the case of Christianity, the idea was (and, strangely enough, is still) one of the chief points of opposition against the original source from which the religion took its course.

¹ *What is Christianity?* p. 238.

More remarkable, however, is the fact, which has already been noted, that Christianity degenerated from its earliest standard in all essentials. Not only did Christianity become hopelessly entangled in the meshes of metaphysical speculation, but to a very considerable extent it has been petrified into a ritualistic mummy, particularly as far as the Oriental and Greek Churches—the oldest in Christendom—are concerned. This striking phenomenon may be explained by the fatal attitude which primitive Christianity took up, not only towards ceremonialism in religion, but towards all matters of worldly interest. The confidently expected end of the world gave the new religion for the moment a supermundane character, while the opposition to Judaism led the Gentile Christians to reject every possible trace of Jewish custom. The freedom from all material forms, which, as a negative doctrine, was preached by some Christian apostles, is indeed regarded in many quarters as constituting the strength of Christianity, but in its fuller development this attractive theory has proved a fatal weakness. It is impossible for a community of human beings to exist for any length of time in a healthy religious condition without due regard to the material as well as the spiritual constitution of man,¹ and when Christianity rejected the Jewish system of life and thought, it was soon obliged to assume

¹ On this point the following words of an Anglican theologian may be quoted with advantage: "And so long as this world is real as well as the next; so long as man is body as well as soul; so long all attempts to evaporate the body and its realities are foredoomed to a necessary and salutary failure. The religion, which attempts to be rid of the bodily side of things spiritual, sooner or later loses hold of all reality. Pure spiritualism, however noble the aspiration, however living the energy

a heathen dress, with heathen ideas and ceremonies. In short, in the endeavour to extricate itself from Judaism, Christianity lost its equilibrium and fell into Polytheism.

But Judaism, by duly recognizing the human element in religion, and by adapting every manifestation of social life to the service of God and man, created a source of power which continually guarded its purity and replenished its strength. It is only by further preserving the bark which has so well maintained the core of the faith, by adhering to the Jewish principle of the hallowing of all the phases of our being, that Judaism will also in the future escape the failure which has hitherto attended all attempts of a purely spiritual nature. The late Prof. Francis William Newman, one of the greatest theists of the nineteenth century, a man whose saintly life was devoted to the refining and spiritualization of religion, sufficiently appreciated the significance of this fact, as well as the value of the Jewish scheme of life. "If a little sect, ever so enlightened," said Prof. Newman, "were flung into the midst of a dark world, it would in the second and third generation ordinarily be absorbed back into that world. Persecution, hereditary institutions and strict intermarriage with none but Church members may, as in the case of the Israelite people, perpetuate the original religion without loss of purity."¹

with which it starts, always has ended at last, and will always end, in evanescence." R. C. Moberly, in *Lux Mundi*, p. 272.

¹ F. W. Newman, *Miscellanies*, ii, p. 352. In this connexion it is remarkable to note that, endowed with still greater mental powers than John Henry Newman, Francis William Newman did not by any means exercise so powerful and permanent an influence on his generation as his brother the Cardinal. Prof.

Judaism was particularly successful in utilizing for its ethical aims all the functions of social life. Even nature and the natural desires and affections were pressed into a religious channel. Every enjoyment, whether it be the purely sensuous one of food and drink, or æsthetic and intellectual pleasures, whether the sight of the ocean or of a wise man, was connected with the glory of God. It was thus that the natural instincts of self-preservation and the propagation of the species were turned into some of the most potent sanctifying forces of life. The civilizing and refining influences to which the instinct of man has raised his mere animal feeding can hardly be too highly estimated ; the periodical nourishment of the body has been converted into occasions for the nourishment of the soul, the strengthening of our friendships and of our family bonds. In Judaism the table became a centre of religion,¹ an altar, at which the breaking of the bread and the drinking of the wine became solemn acts ; the preparation, as well as the consumption, of the food which was to sustain and keep him in mental and bodily health were, with a fine insight into the physiological and psychological effects of diet, turned into matters of serious import. Like the feeding of man, the relations arising out of the married state, were also led into an ethical channel.

Newman, the anti-Christian theist, like Prof. Huxley, the anti-Christian agnostic, was buried with Christian rites.

¹ The following saying of R. Simon is characteristic in this respect: " If three have eaten at a table and have not spoken there any words of Torah, it is as if they had eaten of sacrifices to dead idols, . . . but if three have eaten at a table and have spoken there words of Torah, it is as if they had eaten of God's table, as it is said : ' And he said unto me, This is the table that is before the Lord ' (Ezek. xli. 22)." Aboth, iii. 4.

Perhaps in no religion has the family tie exhibited such a strength as in Judaism, where the propagation of the species was considered as the first commandment of God, and the religious and moral upbringing of one's children an inalienable duty. One of the earliest and the most sacred precepts was to honour father and mother, and the highest reward is promised for its fulfilment. Developed in the spirit of Judaism, this beautiful statute has been maintained without the superstition into which it has degenerated in the Chinese ancestor worship. The spirit of the reciprocal love of parents and children extended among the Jews to the other family relations, particularly to those of husband and wife; even where the Jews have in this instance lacked the *courtoisie* of the Christian knight, it ought to be remembered that the Jew did not possess the coarse vices to which *galanterie* was only a necessary cloak—to be divested at the pleasure of the wearer.

To the just appreciation by the Jew of the value of the family bond is due that to the present day the saying "all Israel are brethren" is not a mere empty formula, and to the practical application of this by its professors Judaism owes no small share of its vitality. To the world outside his own community the Jew was a stranger; the rays of Christian love were not strong enough to penetrate to those outside the pale of Christianity, except by allurements directly intended to wean the Jew from his faith and his people. To leave father and mother and all friends dear to the human heart, to join the stranger, the persecutor, the men who frequently hated his own flesh and blood with a hatred of death, was an outrage which no one capable of even a slight amount of generous feeling for his kith and kin could

perpetrate. The truth and beauty of Christianity as they were represented to the Jew, were never commensurate with the terrible sacrifice of apostasy, the cutting off of oneself for ever from the House of Israel, from its past glory and future hopes.

The hallowing of all the acts of social life by the spirit of Judaism, by its profound charity and all-pervading joyousness, more than compensated the Jew for all the sufferings and humiliations he experienced at the hands of the stranger. Not only the ordinary joyful events of man's being, but also the Sabbath and the cycle of festivals were invested with manifold pleasures, and proved a source of consolation to the Jewish heart. The Sabbath, pictured by the Christian theologian as a day of gloom and a heavy yoke, was a day of rest in the highest sense; where, outside Judaism, can we find anything corresponding with **עונג שבת**, "the delight of the Sabbath"? The beautiful poem of Heine, "Die Prinzessin Sabbath", is not the mere creation of a poet's fancy, but the description of a reality. The hallowing influence of the Sabbath transforms in verity the dog-like existence of the pedlar into the life of a prince, and the invocation of the angels, who are supposed to visit him on the Sabbath eve, to bless his home, is after all no mere illusion. The coming in, as well as the going out, of the festive days is marked by a family gathering; the solemnity and serene joyousness of some of these events, like the synagogue services on the Day of Atonement or the family celebrations on the Passover nights, leave an indelible impression in the hearts of those who have participated in them.

Wherever the Jew went among his brethren, he was sure of a helping hand. He was certain to find at the

house of a more fortunate, if perhaps very poor, co-religionist, a hospitable welcome. Moreover, even the very names of the benevolent agencies prevalent everywhere indicate the delicate feeling with which they were generally administered. Every possible contingency in life calling for the assistance of our fellow beings was met with by Jewish charity, and no community was without the chief, indispensable institutions. The child of the poor man was educated at the **תלמוד תורה** (" the Study of Torah "), when in need he received help from the **גמילות חסדים** (" the Bestowal of Mercies "), when destitute on a journey, he could turn to the **הכנסת אורחים** (" the Reception of Guests ") and when he died, the last rites were reverently performed by a voluntary brotherhood, the **חברא קדישא** (" the Holy Society ").

The old biblical injunction, " thou shalt teach thy children and speak of them,"¹ daily repeated in the Shema, has been fruitful of that universal education which has from very early times prevailed in Judaism, so that Josephus could already say of the Jews that above all it was their principal care to educate their children well.² The imperative obligation of Jewish parents, or, in their absence, of the community, to give religious instruction to the child, as well as the intellectual pursuit from which even the humblest Jew is not exempt, are the reasons why the Jews have perhaps never sunk to the barbarism and ignorance with which they were so frequently surrounded. It is generally overlooked that the poor Jewish pedlar in Russia or Poland, who is invariably familiar with the Hebrew

¹ Deut. vi. 7.

² *Cont. Ap.* i, 12.

Bible and, more or less, conversant with the ethics, history, and jurisprudence of the Talmud and other Jewish compilations, stands intellectually high above the Russian or Polish peasant and tradesman with whom he comes into contact. In those semi-civilized countries the illiterate Jew is an anomaly ; to study the foundations of his faith, to read the Pentateuch and the Prophets, the drama of Job, the Lamentations of Jeremiah, the Ethics of the Jewish Fathers, philosophical treatises like Bachya's *Duties of the Heart*, and to pray with the psalmist—all this in the original—is a religious duty preached and practised second to none. We have only to imagine a community, where the study of, say, Greek literature (and that, if it were possible, with an ethical purpose) is a precept religiously fulfilled by every man in every station of life, from early childhood to death, in order to realize the incalculable effects of such an education. It is only thus that we can account for the extraordinary vigour of intellect which the genius of Judaism was able to maintain among its adherents under the most unfavourable circumstances, even during the darkest days. Mr. Lecky, in his *History of Rationalism*, has with an earnest enthusiasm recorded the services of the Jews to the human race during such periods. "The heroism of the defenders of every other creed," he tells us, "fades into insignificance before this martyr people, who for thirteen centuries confronted all the evils that the fiercest fanaticism could devise, and the infliction of the most hideous sufferings, rather than abandon their faith. . . . But above all this the genius of that wonderful people rose supreme. While those around them were grovelling in the darkness of besotted ignorance ; while juggling miracles

and lying relics were the themes on which almost all Europe were expatiating ; while the intellect of Christendom, enthralled by countless superstitions, had sunk into a deadly torpor, in which all love of inquiry and all search for truth were abandoned, the Jews were still pursuing the path of knowledge, amassing learning and stimulating progress with the same unflinching constancy that they manifested in their faith. They were the most skilful physicians, the ablest financiers, and among the most profound philosophers ; while they were only second to the Moors in the cultivation of natural science.”¹

Of course, the passion for study engendered by Judaism was not to be a mere acquisition of knowledge, nor was it to be used for purely material ends, but it was to have an ethical purport and was to be sought *לשמה*, for its own sake, with the view of finding the Will of God and understanding our duties towards Him and our fellow-men. If, through this insistence upon study, there were sometimes produced *les défauts de ses qualités*, Judaism certainly encouraged and sanctified intellectual pursuits, and the late Benjamin Jowett only expressed an ordinary Rabbinical axiom, when, from his wide and profound experience, he bade us remember that study is a service, perhaps the highest service, that we can tender to God.²

¹ Lecky, *History of Rationalism*, i, p. 282.

² *College Sermons*, p. 200. In connexion with the well known dictum of Hillel (in Aboth, ii. 6) on the incompatibility of true piety and religion with ignorance, it may be well to quote here a strikingly analogous opinion of Buckle, as a sociologist and historian. He says : “ There is no instance on record of an ignorant man who, having good intentions and supreme power to enforce them, has not done far more evil than good. And

The real living and inspiring force which upheld the Jews in their most anxious moments was, however, an element mightier than human love or the thirst for knowledge. The persecutions directed against the Jew were intended to degrade him to the lowest depths of infamy, but his faith raised him far above his persecutor. The real feelings of the Jews at the time of their greatest sorrows can be found expressed in those liturgical compositions which the medieval Jews have bequeathed to us under the name of Selichoth. Here the appeals for mercy or help alternate with joyful expressions that Israel has still remained true to God.

It is natural that the faithful, conscious Israelite should feel a profound emotion in contemplating the chequered course of Jewish history, where, in spite of many frailties and failures, there stands out the unparalleled self-sacrifice of a whole people. To this day, the majority of them, living in the midst of a throbbing civilization, and with a keen appreciation of the realities and vanities of this world, are still struggling in agony because of their faith—here denied advancement in life, there even deprived of the elementary rights of man—yet they have laid all on the altar of God. To generation after generation has temptation come in the shape of everything that men desire, but flesh and blood has withstood it. It is, therefore, no idle boast or empty pride if a descendant of those who brought with them the legacy of a living heroism, recalls in pious reverence the moral triumphs of the past.

whenever the intentions have been very eager and the power very extensive, the evil has been enormous" (*History of Civilization*, i, p. 183. Cf. likewise *ibid.*, i, p. 253 ff.).

And ever since the Jews started on their martyr mission, there have been echoed and re-echoed in the hearts of the sons of Israel the words of that grand, stirring psalm which one of them composed over two thousand years ago, when, overwhelmed with danger, they clung to their faith; and this eternally repeated pledge of loyalty to God is still expressed in the anguish of many a Jewish soul:—

All this is come upon us ;
Yet we have not forgotten Thee,
Neither have we dealt falsely in Thy covenant.
Our heart is not turned back,
Neither have our steps declined from Thy way.
Though Thou hast sore broken us in the place of dragons,
And covered us with the shadow of death.
If we have forgotten the name of our God,
Or stretched out our hands to a strange god,
Shall not God search this out ? ¹

¹ Ps. xliv. 17 ffg.

CHAPTER V

THE UNIVERSALITY OF JUDAISM

“ Thus saith the Lord : Israel is My son, My firstborn.”—*Exodus* iv. 22.

IT has been the fate of Judaism to maintain its existence by an apparently defensive attitude. As a body, Judaism has never gone out into the world to proclaim its doctrines and obtain converts to the same. It has been a constructive force among its own adherents, but never has it set itself the task to alter the existing order of things by violent means. At a time when even Christianity and Mohammedanism justify the life of Judaism, and do not deny the unique value of its work as the guardian of truth, the religion of Israel moved within its own sphere. This is the principle and policy acted upon by its best minds from the earliest ages. Elijah's jealousy for the Lord did not extend beyond the confines of Israel. Isaiah with his universalistic sympathies and aspirations, with his prediction that the word of God would go out of Jerusalem to all the nations of the earth, with his vision that the Lord will bless “ Egypt My people, and Assyria the work of My hands, and Israel Mine inheritance,”¹ that great Hebrew prophet took no active part in the spiritual affairs of foreign nations. Hillel, who gave to a would-be proselyte his famous declaration that

¹ Is. xix. 24, 25.

the essence of the Torah consists of the rule, "Do not unto others what thou wouldest not that others should do unto thee," even this liberal-minded sage did not propagate his religious views outside the Jewish communion.

This attitude of Judaism has given rise in many quarters to the misconception and misrepresentation that Judaism is a tribal religion, a faith confined to one people, jealously guarding its borders against foreign intrusion and limiting its selfish hopes to its own narrow circle. Such a view of Judaism brings with it so perverted an idea of its character, that it is most essential to place the nature of its functions and the scope of its aspirations in a true light.

It has first of all to be recognized that Judaism is not dependent upon any nationalistic embodiment. As a matter of fact, since the Babylonian Captivity Judaism ceased to be, in practice as well as in theory, a religion limited by geographical and racial boundaries. The loss of their country had turned the Jews from a nation, in the usual sense of the word, into a Holy Communion, **כנסת ישראל**, the Synagogue of Israel. Assemblies for Divine Service and the reading and exposition of the sacred literature multiplied in the Jewish settlements all over the Babylonian Empire; in these houses of study and worship, prayer superseded sacrifices, and became the recognized medium of praise and supplication of the Creator, while the Temple of Jerusalem was regarded either as a sacred memory, or, at most, the hallowed centre of the Jewish religion. Wherever God was invoked, there was a temple,¹ every

¹ "In every place where I cause My name to be remembered I will come unto thee and bless thee" (Exod. xx. 24; cf. Aboth, iii. 7).

table at which people partook of food and thanked the Lord for it, became an altar.¹

As the absence of the Temple did away with the sacrificial service, so through the loss of the Judean independence, Judaism tended to become a religion of world-wide extent. Before Jerusalem was destroyed by Titus, the Jews were to be found in all parts of the Roman Empire, and in very considerable numbers outside it. An harmonious diversity of life and thought was produced by the various sections of Judaism, notably in Egypt, where the Jews had developed a religious philosophy almost independent of the Palestinian, and in Parthia, where the Babylonian Talmud was evolved and with it the foundation of a decentralized Judaism. Judaism had so far outgrown its former home that, from the meagre help the very numerous Jews in Parthia gave to the Jewish insurrection against the Romans, it is evident that the troubles in Judea did not very greatly affect the position of Judaism as a whole. It was only when the consequences of the fall of Jerusalem, and the sad failure of the Bar Cochba revolt, became evident; when some centuries later Christian persecution began its long, dreary course, that the Jews felt so bitterly the loss of their former home. Thus the coming future reign of freedom became associated with the return to Zion. In their intense faith that God was always with them, that "in their affliction He was also afflicted,"² they even thought that His glory was in exile with His people. Wherever, as in Babylonia or Spain, they were able to live and thrive, Zion

¹ Cf. Aboth iii. 4. R. Jochanan considered the table to have superseded the altar. Ber. 55a.

² Isa. lxiii. 9.

practically became a source of purely spiritual aspirations. The longing for a return to the Holy Land, for which the Jews prayed in dark and troublous times, has indelibly impressed itself on the Jewish Prayer Book, but the modern Jew in Western Europe and America, while generally retaining the old prayers, has invested them with a larger meaning.

Even Zionism, which aims at re-creating a Jewish Commonwealth in Palestine, where the wandering and harassed Jew should at last find rest for his weary feet, is a proof of the evolution of the nationalistic sentiment in Judaism.

The modern Zionist movement is practically the offspring of the fierce Jewish persecutions in Russia and Rumania, as well as of the anti-Semitic crusade in such enlightened countries as Germany, Austria and France, during the last quarter of the nineteenth century; it is the result of the partial failure of the Jewish attempt to merge as completely as possible in the national life of European peoples. The sincere efforts of the Jews in this direction have been spurned with contempt, and Christian Europe has invented the pseudo-scientific theory of Anti-Semitism, based on the alleged superiority of the Aryan over the Semitic race—the race to which Jesus and his apostles belonged. This struck indiscriminately at every man of Jewish birth; it indicted the most indifferent, even the baptized Jew.¹ Most deeply did it affect that large and important class of Jews, who, discarding more or less their Jewish sympathies, affected a cosmopolitan humanitarianism.

¹ A man like the late Paulus Cassel, who had embraced Christianity from conscientious motives, felt that he had at least "graves" to defend.

Their dream of universal brotherhood was destroyed by the touch of reality. But the enthusiasm once engendered was not lost ; it was turned into a different channel, shaped into a tangible form and applied for the benefit of one's own kith and kin. The universalistic aspirations of the western Jew and the hope so long nursed by his eastern brother, that Israel shall once again like an eagle renew its youth, were now fused into the old Messianic ideal of human happiness and joy. Nevertheless, in spite of the fascinating genius and noble personality of the late Theodor Herzl, to whom this nationalistic idea owes its present embodiment, and in spite of some of his distinguished coadjutors, the movement is treated with a certain hostility by a majority of the emancipated Jews. Here we can discern the true sentiments of the modern Jews in regard to the return to Palestine. Those who are still bound to a literal interpretation of the biblical phraseology in reference to the Return, no less than those who regard it metaphorically, partly repudiate the Zionist scheme out of fear that it might tend to rob Judaism of its world-citizenship.¹

¹ The above is the general view of Western Jews on the subject, but I feel bound to add my own profound conviction, in support of the opinion of many others, that the opposition to the Zionist movement is neither desirable nor justified in the best and highest interests of the Jewish people. It is the ultimate aim of Zionism—which represents a synthesis of the needs and aspirations of modern Jewry—to again create in Palestine (as in the time of the Second Temple) a rallying centre for the Jews, which will raise their *morale* all over the world, and where their spiritual genius, once more in touch with its native soil, may be quickened into a new birth. It is surely the inalienable duty of every conscious Jew and Jewess to lend a sympathetic heart and a willing hand towards this end.

It is remarkable that the power of the Jew to completely adapt himself to the highest level of the national life surrounding him has been noticed and acknowledged as early as the fourth century B.C.E., by one of the greatest thinkers of ancient times. Referring to a Jew whom he had met in Asia Minor, Aristotle says that this Jew had become a Hellene not only in language, but in soul, and that in his intercourse with Aristotle and other Greek philosophers he had given more than he received.¹ The capability of the Jews of being faithful citizens of diverse nations, whilst maintaining their religious individuality, is one of the testimonies to the continuity of the spirit of Jewish life. Like so many other prominent phases of modern Judaism, this can be traced as far back as the Babylonian Captivity. When Jeremiah advised the Jews in Babylonia to establish a permanent home in the land of their exile, he exhorted them in the name of the Lord: "Seek the peace of the city whither I have caused you to be carried away captive, and pray unto the Lord for it, for in the peace thereof shall ye have peace."² Writing at a time when a Jewish State was actually in existence, the following words of Philo may, with equal truth, be practically used in the twentieth century: "For no one country can contain the whole Jewish nation, by reason of its populousness, on which account they frequent all the most prosperous and fertile countries of Europe and Asia, whether islands or continents, looking indeed upon the holy city as their metropolis in which is erected the sacred temple of the most High God, but accounting those regions which have been occupied by their fathers and grandfathers and great-

¹ Josephus, *Cont. Apion.*, i, 22.

² Jer. xxix. 7.

grandfathers, and still more remote ancestors, in which they have been born and brought up, as their country ; and there are even some regions to which they came the very moment that they were originally settled, sending a colony of their people to do a pleasure to the founders of the colony.”¹ Finally, the Talmudic legislation, which, in secular matters, culminates in the dictum **דינא דמלכותא דינא**, “the law of the land is supreme,” may be said to have laid a secure and correct basis for the relations between Jews and their nationality.

Just as Paul, though a Jew, appealed with pride to his Roman citizenship, so truly conscious is the modern Jew of the nationality with which he is intimately bound up by the ties of sentiment and interest ; by birth, speech and thought ; by social and historical connexions ; by the privileges and responsibilities of a fatherland.

It seems to be the destiny of the Jews to have to demonstrate that there is not only a broader basis for national life than physical affinity can provide, but that there is also at the same time a higher test of truth than conformity to the dominant national system of religion, whether as defined by decrees of kings or by the force of numbers. It has been claimed that one of the greatest services of the Roman Catholic Church, and her peculiar value to mankind, consisted in her championship of the liberty of conscience against the tyranny of the State. This, however, is only in so far true as this plea is directed against the national Protestant Churches, particularly where they have been degraded into a mere

¹ Philo, *Against Flaccus*, Yonge's transl., iv. p. 70.

department of the secular government. In practice, Roman Catholicism only proclaims the freedom of worship where it finds itself threatened; in countries under complete Catholic rule, like the former Papal State, this idea seemed unknown, and was not even claimed as a virtue. Catholic Christianity, by aspiring not only to an absolute supremacy over all souls, but also to an unlimited secular power in the State, can hardly, with a long history of an uninterrupted struggle for political dominion, be considered a purely spiritual agency. But Judaism, while recognizing no national or geographical boundaries in matters of faith, is always loyal, and owes no allegiance except to the government whose protection it enjoys. Invariably existing as a minority amidst a majority, Judaism has assimilated to an unusual extent the wisdom of toleration and fellowship,¹ while the generous and practical application of the Talmudic adage that one Israelite is responsible for the other, has made the Jewish citizen of any country also a member of a world-wide spiritual brotherhood.

¹ "The poor of the stranger are to be supported with the poor of Israel; the sick of the stranger are to be tended like the sick of Israel; the dead of the stranger are to be buried with the dead of Israel, and the mourners of the stranger are to be comforted like the mourners of Israel—on account of the ways of peace" (Gittin, 61a. Cf. Maimonides, *Hil. Mel.*, ch. x. 12). The meaning of the words, "on account of the ways of peace," מפני דרכי שלום, is not the mere selfish prudence into which it has been sometimes misconstrued by unfriendly critics, but, as has been pointed out by Prof. Lazarus, it really denotes the bringing together into closer harmony of the divisions of the human race by means of mercy and kindness, and, as an illustration of the true meaning, he appropriately quotes the well-known Rabbinical maxim: לא נברא כל התורה כולה אלה מפני דרכי שלום, "The whole Torah was only created on account of the ways of peace." Cf. *Die Ethik d. Judenthums*, i, §174.

But the interest of Judaism is not confined to its own adherents ; its outlook is co-extensive with humanity. In the Bible, the history, as well as in the prayers, of the Jews, the salvation of the whole human race is indissolubly bound up with the hopes and destiny of Israel. This fundamental standpoint of Judaism lies in its very inception. The promise to the Patriarchs that God will bless their descendants is coupled with the statement that the world will be blessed through them. This is the key to the history of Judaism. The election of Israel as a medium of the divine purpose was not merely for the sake of the sons of Jacob, but to fulfil a function in the economy of the world. In Daniel, the fortunes of the Jews are intimately connected with the great events of history. The prophets did not occupy themselves in their discourses with Israel only, but with all the peoples of the earth known to them. Jeremiah was sanctified and ordained to be a prophet unto the world, and God set him "over the nations and over the kingdoms, to root out and to pull down, and to destroy and to throw down, to build and to plant."¹ Jonah, Obadiah and Nahum address themselves exclusively to foreign nations ; the prophets were sent by God direct to them, for "the Lord is the God of the spirits of all flesh." Isaiah delivers special discourses to Assyria, Babylonia, Philistia, Moab, Egypt, Persia, Media, Arabia, Idumea, and Tyre ; he takes a sympathetic interest in them, and, in the name of God, laments their sad fate : "Therefore I will bewail with the weeping of Jazer the vine of Sibmah ; I will water thee with my tears, O Heshbon and Elealeh : for upon thy summer fruits and upon thy harvest the battle-

¹ Jer. i. 5-10.

shout is fallen.”¹ Nor is the power of prophecy and greatness of soul confined in the Hebrew Scriptures to Israelites only. The remarkable prophecies of Balaam, and the noble discourses of Job and his friends are ascribed to men who were not children of the Covenant. It was fully recognized that “God extends his goodness over all His creatures and His tender mercies over all His works.”²

Incomparably just and generous is the treatment accorded to the גֵר, the sojourner, the stranger, in the Mosaic legislation. The consideration and love to be shown to the alien is constantly inculcated, with the significant reminder: “For ye know the heart (or soul) of the stranger, seeing ye were strangers in the land of Egypt; I am the Lord your God.”³ His feelings are to be regarded and spared: “Thou shalt neither vex a stranger nor oppress him.”⁴ The largest measure of love was to be held out to him: “The stranger that dwelleth with you shall be unto you as one born among you, and thou shalt love him as thyself.”⁵ The alien was to be equal before the law with the native Israelite: “One law shall be to him that is homeborn and unto

¹ Isa. xvi. 9.

² Cf. Psalm cxlv. It is particularly notable that this Psalm (אִשְׁרֵי יוֹשְׁבֵי בֵיתְךָ), which embraces in God's kingdom “all flesh,” and declares that “the Lord is nigh unto all them that call upon Him, to all that call upon Him in truth,” is the most frequently repeated Psalm in the whole Jewish Liturgy.

³ Note the sentiments with which the Hebrews were to regard the Egyptians. There was to be no touch of revengeful or bitter feeling against the former oppressor, but lessons of love towards strangers were deduced from the position of the Israelites in Egypt, and the treatment of the Egyptian was to be particularly tender.

⁴ Exod. xxii. 21; xxiii. 9.

⁵ Lev. xix. 34.

the stranger that sojourneth among you.”¹ In the beautiful custom to leave the gleanings of the vineyard to the poor, the stranger is included among them.² The rest of the Sabbath day is also intended that “the stranger may be refreshed,”³ and this forms part of the fundamental Ten Words.⁴ For the sojourner was also a brother: “And if thy brother be waxen poor, and fallen in decay with thee; then thou shalt relieve him: yea, though he be a stranger or a sojourner; that he may live with thee.”⁵ In the sight of the Lord, to whom the whole universe belongs, the Jews are in no way higher than the so-called strangers and sojourners: “He regardeth not persons, nor taketh reward: He doth execute the judgment of the fatherless and widow, and loveth the stranger. . . . Love ye therefore the stranger: for ye were strangers in the land of Egypt.”⁷

Nor was Judaism averse to the complete incorporation of the stranger within its own body. It is a popular, but no less decided, fallacy that Judaism, by reason of its constitution, has ever been hostile to the reception of proselytes. From the time of the Mosaic legislation we can discern the process by which non-Israelites were admitted into the privileges and responsibilities of the covenant of Abraham. The original inhabitants of Canaan gradually became merged with the invaders, and in the biblical writings we catch frequently recurring glimpses of people who attached themselves (הגלויים or המת'חרים) to Israel. Solomon's prayer at the dedication

¹ Exod. xii. 49; Lev. xxiv. 22.

² Lev. xix. 10; xxiii. 22.

³ Exod. xxiii. 12.

⁴ Exod. xx. 10; Deut. v. 14.

⁵ Lev. xxv. 35.

⁶ Lev. xxv. 23.

⁷ Deut. x. 17-19.

of the Temple is a measure of the large-hearted view which was taken of the functions of the Sanctuary on Mount Zion. He supplicates that God may not only grant the prayers of the Israelites, who will come there in times of sorrow and distress, but should also answer the stranger : “ Moreover concerning the stranger that is not of Thy people Israel, but cometh out of a far country for thy name’s sake ; (for they shall hear of Thy great name and of Thy strong hand and of Thy stretched out arm ;) when he shall come and pray towards this house ; hear Thou in heaven Thy dwelling place, and do according to all that the stranger calleth to Thee for : that all the peoples of the earth may know Thy name to fear Thee as doth Thy people Israel, and that they may know that this house which I have builded is called by Thy name.”¹ It was particularly from the time of the Babylonian Captivity, when in spite, or rather, because, of this terrible disaster, Judaism became ineradicably established in the hearts of its adherents, that many heathen turned from their idolatry to serve the Holy One of Israel. It was at this period that there appeared those soul-stirring discourses in Isaiah, which have provided a source of inspiration to Israel and the world. The prophet proclaims that God will gather all nations unto Him ; He will set the Jews as a sign among the Gentiles afar off to declare His glory among them. And all those who have entered his covenant are equal ; the strangers like the born Israelites are to become priests and Levites in the service of God.² Those who have accepted the God of Israel shall also share in the blessings of Israel’s covenant with Him. “ Neither let the stranger, that hath joined himself to the Lord, speak, saying, the

¹ 1 Kings viii. 41-43.

² Isa. lxvi. 18-21.

Lord will surely separate me from His people ; neither let the eunuch say, Behold, I am a dry tree. For thus saith the Lord of the eunuchs that keep My sabbaths and choose the things that please Me, and hold fast by My covenant : unto them will I give in Mine house and within My walls a place and a memorial better than of sons and daughters ; I will give them an everlasting name that shall not be cut off. Also the strangers that join themselves to the Lord to minister unto Him, and to love the name of the Lord, to be His servants ; every one that keepeth the sabbath from polluting it, and holdeth fast by My covenant ; even them will I bring to My holy mountain and make them joyful in My house of prayer. . . for My house shall be called an house of prayer for all peoples.”¹ The heart of the prophet goes out to those who, though not of Israel, cleave unto the Lord and confide in Him, Who is the father of every human soul : “ Doubtless Thou art our Father, though Abraham be ignorant of us and Israel acknowledge us not : Thou, O Lord, art our Father, our redeemer, Thy name is from everlasting.”²

So long as these noble utterances form a part of the sacred records of the faith and hopes of Israel, the words of the great Jewish prophet will ever provide the standard by which the proselyte should be regarded in Judaism. The idyllic story of Ruth, by which the Moabite woman became the ancestress of the most illustrious Jewish family, the house of David, has cast a halo round the head of the proselyte.³ To become one of them was no reproach ; on the contrary, it was a

¹ Isa. lvi. 3-7.

² Ibid., lxiii. 16.

³ Ruth is to the present day a favourite name given to Jewish female proselytes ; thus, the gifted Nahida Remy, who has

privilege and a distinction. Not only were such eminent Talmudic sages like Shemaiah and Abtalion, R. Akiba and R. Meir, proselytes, or immediate descendants of them, but there is no name in post-canonical Jewish literature better known than that of Onkelos the proselyte, the author of the Targum that bears his name.

The influence of Jewish legislation over the non-Jewish population of the Judean State was the means of bringing many new adherents to Judaism. The old distinction between the גֵּרִים, the native and foreign strangers, who were at peace with the Israelites and probably observed to a certain extent their laws and customs, and the תּוֹשָׁבִים, the aborigines of Canaan, who still maintained their paganism and were more or less at war with their conquerors, fell into desuetude when the heathen inhabitants of Palestine were eventually absorbed into Judaism. But from the time of the Babylonian Captivity, the Jews found themselves, even partly in Judea, amidst heathen surroundings and under a heathen government. The various altered circumstances which came into existence at the time of the second Temple also affected the position of Judaism towards those who had completely embraced its teachings and practices, as well as those who, imbued with reverence and attachment to Judaism, had not yet signified their intention of seeking admission into the community of Israel. The former category of proselytes, the גֵּרֵי צְדָקָה, proselytes of righteousness, have remained to this day.¹ Those,

secured a high place among the distinguished women of Israel she has so sympathetically described in *Das Jüdische Weib*, took the additional name of Ruth on her conversion to Judaism.

¹ The following ancient prayer, which forms part of the so-

again, who did not entirely submit to Judaism, but abstained from idolatry, and in some measure conformed to the ethical and ceremonial code of the Jewish religion, became known as **גְּרֵי תוֹשָׁב**, proselytes of the gate. For various reasons they have ceased to be recognized in Judaism, but a description of their qualifications gives us a good idea of what the Rabbis considered a Gentile ought to be in order to be practically a Jew, and to be regarded as such by the Israelite. The book of Genesis told them that there was a covenant before the Jewish covenant; that before Abraham, the father of Judaism, God had revealed Himself to man and made a covenant with him, and they, therefore, composed a system of morals which was deduced from the commandments of God to Noah. While it was recognized that the Torah was only obligatory on the sons of Jacob, the laws given to Noah, the father of the human race after the Deluge, were considered to be universal and binding on all mankind. These laws were called the Seven Commandments of the Noachidæ, **ז' מצוות בני נח** and consisted in the acknowledgment of the one and only true God, and the consequent rejection of idolatry, the inviolability of human life, abstention from the flesh and blood of living animals, the prohibition of blasphemy, incest and robbery, and obedience to lawfully constituted authorities.¹ Not only was a non-Israelite

called Eighteen Blessings in the Jewish Liturgy, gives some idea of the regard in which the proselytes of righteousness have been held in Judaism: "Towards the righteous and the pious, towards the elders of Thy people the House of Israel, towards the remnant of their scribes, towards the proselytes of righteousness, and towards us also may Thy tender mercies be stirred, O Lord our God" (*Daily Prayer Book*, Singer, p. 48).

¹ Sanh. 56b, ffg.; Abodah Zara, 64b.

who faithfully observed these commandments assured of the bliss of the future world, but he was declared to be equal to the High Priest.¹ During several centuries before and after the fall of Jerusalem there was a vast number of these Judaizing heathen in the Roman and Parthian Empires whom, attached or unattached to the Synagogue, we meet under the names of 'יראי ה' "they that fear the Lord,"² "devout people," etc.³ As to such, it was declared that any one who rejected the worship of idols was already called a Jew.⁴

If the living power of a religion be measured by the zeal with which it is propagated and spread, Judaism never showed greater vitality than during the period which is considered by most Christian theologians as the classical age of Jewish decay. When Judea came under the power of Rome, and the Jews spread over the vast Empire, there took place an immense accession to the Jewish ranks. The works of Philo and Josephus, as well as the New Testament and contemporary Roman writers, give ample evidence of the extensive Jewish influence on the Roman world of that time. It was little of an exaggeration when Josephus said that "the multitude have for a long time a great inclination to follow our religious observances, for there is not in any city of the Grecians nor any of the barbarians, nor any nation whatsoever, whither our customs had not come. So that if any one will but reflect on his own country and his own family, he will have reason to give credit to what I say."⁵ A great

¹ Abodah Zara, 3a; Sanh. 50a; Maimonides, Mishné Torah, *Hil. Mel.*, viii. 2.

² Psalm cxviii. 4.

⁴ Megillah, 13a.

³ In the Acts.

⁵ Jos., *Cont. Apion*, ii. 40.

number of Greeks formed part of the Jewish communion,¹ and Dion Cassius, writing at the beginning of the third century, knew that there were Jews by race as well as by adoption.² Juvenal lamented the fact that even where the father was only a half-Jew, the children became complete, and even fanatical, Jews,³ and the satirist's inclusion of Judaism among the superstitions indulged in by many Roman women is well-known.⁴ Indeed, the high moral tone of Judaism, as opposed to the prevalent licentiousness among the heathen, attracted many female proselytes to Judaism. In some places, like Damascus, most women had become converted, and we read of many noble matrons who turned Jewesses and even suffered martyrdom for their new faith. The recurring edicts of Roman Emperors against the adoption of Judaism by Romans show that it was regarded as a danger to be combated ; some of the highest in the land were guilty of " Judaizing," and the religion of Israel had its adherents sometimes even in the Imperial family. The Empress Poppæa became a Jewess, and was buried as such at her request ; Domitian ordered his relative Flavius Clemens (whose sons had been destined as successors to the throne) to be executed, because he, with many others, had been guilty of adopting Judaism.⁵

That there existed no social or religious barriers between those who were Jews by birth and those by affiliation, may be gauged by the fact that proselytes were studying in the Rabbinical academies. These

¹ Jos., *B.J.* vii. 3, 3. ² Dion Cassius, *Hist. Rom.*, xxxvii. 17.

³ Sat., xiv. 95 ffg.

⁴ *Ibid.* vi. 541 ffg.

⁵ Cf. Graetz, *Die jüdischen Proselyten im Römerreiche*, etc., annexed to the *Jahresbericht des jüd.-theol. Seminars in Breslau*, 1884.

good feelings and relations also extended to female converts; there was one of them in Rome named Beturia Paulina, who seemed to have rendered important services to the Jewish community there and to have been held by them in high esteem, as she was entitled "mother of the synagogues."¹

There was altogether a sufficient sense of appreciation of the importance of the new members of the faith, and the reception accorded to them was commensurately generous. Writing of the laws of Moses regarding proselytes, Philo said: "Accordingly, having given equal rank and honour to all those who came over, and having granted to them the same favours that were bestowed on the native Jews, he recommends those who are ennobled by truth not only to treat them with respect, but even with special friendship and excessive benevolence."²

If it were necessary to broadly define the position of the Talmud towards the proselyte, we cannot take a higher authority than Maimonides, the greatest exponent of Talmudical Judaism. His opinion on the subject of proselytes is contained in a correspondence with a convert named Obadiah, who is respectfully termed מֵרַנָּא וּרְבָנָא עוֹבַדֵּיהַּ הַמְּשָׁכִיל הַמְּבִין וְגו'. In answer to the question as to whether he could rightly use in his prayers such formulas as: "Our God and the God of our fathers," "Whom Thou hast chosen," etc., Maimonides said that the proselyte was to use these phrases, because Abraham, the father of all the faithful, was also his father, and he is referred to the passage in Isaiah: "Neither let the stranger that

¹ The synagogue in Capernaum in which Jesus used to worship was built by a proselyte—the centurion whose servant was healed by Jesus (Luke vii. 5). ² Yonge's tr., iii, p. 186.

hath joined himself to the Lord speak, saying, the Lord will surely separate me from His people.”¹ Maimonides then continues: “אין שום הפרש בינינו ובינך” There is absolutely no difference between us and thee; for the Creator hath also chosen thee from among the nations; let thy יהוס (pedigree) not be light in thine eyes, for if we pride ourselves upon our connexion with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, thou mayest pride thyself of being connected with Him, who spake and the world existed.” In answer to Obadiah, who complained of having been called a fool by his teacher, Maimonides said that the teacher had grievously sinned; he ought to beg the disciple’s pardon and pray to God for forgiveness. “Doth he not know,” exclaims Maimonides, “that the Torah commandeth us in thirty-six places to be kind to the proselyte? Great is the commandment in regard to our duties to proselytes. We are told to honour and to fear father and mother, to hearken to prophets, but, as to the proselyte, we are told to love him with a great love: ‘Ye shall love the stranger (or proselyte)’, in the same way as we are commanded to love God Himself: ‘And thou shalt love thy God,’ for the Lord Himself loveth the proselyte: ‘He loveth the stranger.’” Maimonides likens the proselyte, who has left everything behind him in order to follow the truth and to rest under the wings of the Shechinah, to Abraham, and declares that, as the Lord blessed him, so will He also bless the proselyte in this and the future world, and will cause him to participate in the salvation promised unto Israel.²

¹ Isa. lvi. 3.

² קובץ תשובות הרמב"ם ואגרותיו, חלק א', קנה, קס ed. Abra-

Among those debts which Christianity owes to Judaism, there is hardly one which has been so much ignored, if not repudiated, than the active proselytizing spirit which existed in Judaism when its daughter-religion developed out of the spiritual riches which had been accumulated in Israel. There was not, indeed, an organized effort to bring the heathen over to Judaism; there were also no threatening denunciations against the unbeliever and the announcement of the immediate destruction of the world, as we find in the Christian propaganda from its beginning; but the Jews felt how superior their religion was to that of paganism, and this feeling was frequently translated into word and deed. Apart from the mere existence of very numerous proselytes, we have a great deal of evidence to this effect in the writings of Hellenistic Jews, particularly in the Jewish Sibylline Oracles, which were specially written for the purpose of glorifying the God of Israel in the eyes of the nations. There were men who made it their task to acquaint the heathen with the heritage of Israel, and to urge its acceptance by them. Like the modern Mohammedan missionary, the Jewish missionary was frequently a merchant who was as zealous for the propagation of his religion as for the sale of his wares. The story of the conversion of the royal house of Adiabene, some of whom distinguished themselves by their attachment to Judaism, illustrates the process by which a knowledge of Judaism was often imparted to the heathen. Whilst Izates, the heir to the throne of Adiabene, resided at the court of Abennerig, the King of

ham Lichtenberg. These two letters ought to be read by everyone who wishes to have an authoritative view of the Talmudical position on the proselyte question.

Charax-Spasini, a Jewish merchant named Ananias, who got among the women of the King's harem, "taught them to worship God according to the Jewish religion. He, moreover, by their means became known to Izates, and persuaded him in like manner to embrace that religion." When Izates returned to his native country, he found that his mother Helena had meanwhile also been converted to Judaism by a Jewish teacher.¹

Paul's preaching to the heathen was, as a matter of fact, no original departure in Judaism. In opposition to the first and immediate disciples of Jesus, who, as Galilean peasants, impregnated with the narrow views of their class, confined themselves, as once directed by their master, to "the lost sheep of the House of Israel," Paul, who had come under the enlightened influences of Rabban Gamaliel and the Hellenistic Jews of Tarsus, was indeed "the apostle of the Gentiles." But in the Jewish Diaspora there were others before him who compassed sea and land to make proselytes.² Before Christianity arose, before Paul had declared the equality of all believers in Christ, Philo boasted that the Laws of Moses "lead after them and influence all nations, barbarians and Greeks, the inhabitants of continents and islands, the eastern nations and the western, Europe and Asia; in short, the whole habitable world from one extremity to the other."³

Nor was Paul the first to recognize the rite of circumcision as a serious obstacle in the rapid conversion of the heathen, and to repudiate it as a necessary means of admission. The Talmud records strong differences of opinions among the Rabbis as to whether circum-

¹ Jos. *Ant.* xx. 2.

² Matt. xxiii. 15.

³ *Life of Moses*, Yonge's tr., ii. 137 ff.

cision was an essential part in the reception of proselytes of righteousness.¹

With some Hellenistic Jews (whom we may divide into conservatives and radicals) the ceremonial law was not an indispensable part of Judaism. Among the conservatives the commandments were explained, or explained away, with an allegorical meaning, while many radicals rejected their observance, as being a hindrance to the progress of their religion among the philosophical Greeks.

An interesting example of a Jewish propagandist, whose Judaism was a Paulinism without Christ, meets us in Apollos. This Alexandrian Jew, who is described as "an eloquent man and mighty in scriptures," came to Ephesus to preach "the things of the Lord." He had not heard of Jesus, and was only probably aware of the rite of baptism among the Essenes, but when some believers of Christ met him, they found it only necessary to show him that Jesus had been the promised Messiah, in order to turn the Jewish into a Christian propagandist.²

It is owing to the wide diffusion by the Jews of their religious doctrines, and to the spread of the Bible, translated by Jews into the dominant literary language of the time, that Christianity was able to propagate itself so rapidly during the first and second centuries. The Christian apostles went on their missionary journeys from one synagogue to another, where they preached their doctrine and now and again found a sympathetic ear. One example will suffice to show the state of the synagogues at that time, and the advantages provided by the existence thereof to the apostles.

When Paul came into the synagogue in Antioch on

¹ Yeb. 46a.

² Acts xviii. 24-28.

a Sabbath day, he was invited by the authorities of the synagogue, after the reading of the Torah and the prophetic lesson, to say a word of exhortation to the worshippers there. He addressed the audience, which consisted of Jews by adoption as well as by birth, as "Men of Israel and ye that fear God," and also as "Men and brethren, children of the stock of Abraham, and whosoever among you feareth God," and it was quite in accord with Jewish sentiment when he spoke to these men of different origin, but of one faith, that God chose "our fathers." We are told that Paul made such an impression on the "Gentiles" there that, when he preached the next Sabbath, there "came almost the whole city to hear the word of God." But when it was found that this "brother" had taken advantage of the invitation to preach in the synagogue to deliver a discourse wherein he proclaimed the doctrine of a man by whom "all that believe are justified from all things from which ye could not be justified by the Law of Moses," the Jews, it is said, "spoke against those things which were spoken by Paul, contradicting and blaspheming," and even "stirred up the devout and honourable women and the chief men of the city" against the apostle. Then, the narrative says: "Many of the Jews and religious proselytes followed Paul and Barnabas, who, speaking to them, persuaded them to continue in the grace of God."¹

The theories of some of the apostles regarding a semi-human saviour of men found little favour and credence among those Jews who were well acquainted with their religion, but a ready soil was prepared for nascent Christianity among the neo-Jews, who, enthusiastic

¹ Cf. Acts xiii, 14 ffg.

in their new faith, generously gave a willing ear to every Jewish teacher. This is well shown by the conversion to Christianity of a Jewish proselyte, a chamberlain of the queen of Ethiopia. This man was met reading in his chariot the book of Isaiah, by a Christian named Philip. Philip inquired of him whether he understood what he read, and was answered: "How can I, except some one shall guide me?" and he asked Philip to sit down with him in his chariot. The Ethiopian, who had been reading the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah, inquired of whom the prophet spoke. Philip thereupon explained to him the history of Jesus, and as they came to a water, the Ethiopian said: "See, here is water, what doth hinder me to be baptized?" He was told that if he believed with all his heart this could be done, and the answer being: "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God," he immediately went down into the water and was baptized.¹

The character of the proselytes, as well as other attendant circumstances, brought about a reaction in Judaism which led to the adoption of a critical, if not an unfavourable, view of missionary efforts. The converts were found to be deficient in their understanding of the new religion, and their very enthusiasm was sometimes mixed with a *naïveté* which, as in the case of the Ethiopian chamberlain just cited, made them the prey of the many philosophies and superstitions which floated about in the Roman Empire during the first two or three Christian centuries.² To the spiritual

¹ Acts viii. 27-38.

² Modern Christian missionaries among civilized pagans will easily appreciate the difficulties which have to be contended with in the case of proselytes subjected to the controversies of many opposing sects.

anarchy which prevailed at the time was added the subtle metaphysical reasoning to which the Greek mind was addicted, and the Jewish leaders were well advised in not turning their religion into a battleground of those conflicting opinions which made the Christian Church from its beginning a body rent by innumerable theories of questions beyond human ken. The famous policy of Paul of being all things to all men, which worked so successfully, but has burdened Christianity to the present day with a heavy load of dried-up metaphysics, was not adopted by the Rabbis, whose religion concerned itself more with life than with speculation. Nevertheless, if, through experience and policy, certain Rabbis were led to use depreciatory or even condemnatory opinions regarding proselytes, it would be as just to consider these expressions as constituting the position of Judaism in the matter as to judge the nature of Christianity by the well-known passage in the Sermon on the Mount: "Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine,"¹ or by the answer of Jesus to the appeal of the Canaanite woman: "It is not meet to take the children's bread and to cast it to the dogs."² If one Rabbi said that proselytes are to Israel like ulcers on a body,³ another one declared that Israel was purposely spread about the world to gain proselytes.⁴

It is now becoming more and more recognized that so far from being intensely exclusive and hostile to the reception of strangers, Judaism has actually absorbed into its body millions of proselytes, but the inestimable service which was rendered by Judaism to its daughter-

¹ Matt. vii. 6.

² Matt. xv. 26.

³ Yeb. 47*b*.

⁴ Pes. 87*b*.

religion by providing it with universalistic sympathies, and in pointing the way to the conquest of the human race, is not yet adequately appreciated by Christian theologians. Renan has justly measured this when he says that, in considering the causes of the early progress of Christianity among the heathen, the glory of Christianity is really confounded with that of Judaism.¹

A decided check was given to the spread of Judaism in countries under Greek and Roman influence when the Church allied itself with the power of the sword, and used the latter without compunction and to the fullest extent possible. It was not of its own accord that the Synagogue had to strengthen its defences and to prepare for a long and unremitting siege, for this was forced upon it by outside changes in the political and religious world. If Judaism had been intrinsically exclusive and hostile to outsiders, there would have been no cause for the many restrictive enactments of the Church and Christian governments against the social and even religious intercourse between Jew and non-Jew. The Fathers of the Church, Church Councils and Christian kings and Emperors, vied with each other in attempts to crush any possible spread of Judaism. These decrees have been more or less in force almost to our own generation, until, in Western Europe at least, they have been gradually relaxed or abolished. With such barbarous penalties as, in the Russian Empire even to the present day, have been meted out to converts to Judaism and to those involved in their conversion, the Jews have naturally lost all desire for a missionary activity. When, as it is so often exemplified in Jewish history, a

¹ Renan, *Les Apôtres*, p. 260.

Jewish proselyte became a source of the greatest danger to the Jewish community at large ; when, on his account, it was threatened with pillage, expulsion and massacre, it will readily be imagined why the Jew became unwilling to enlist converts to his faith.

A few examples will suffice. The persecutions which broke out against the Jews in the Frankish dominions after the very favourable conditions under which they had lived there under Charlemagne and his son Louis le Débonnaire, may be directly attributed to the envy and hatred of the Christian clergy at the preference for Judaism shown by many Christians,¹ and the subsequent conversion of some of them, notably that of Bishop Bodo. This distinguished ecclesiastic, the spiritual adviser and favourite of the Emperor Louis, went on a pilgrimage to Rome, to visit the graves of the apostles and martyrs and to receive the blessing of the Pope. But the sights that presented themselves to the pious pilgrim in the metropolis of Christendom and the city of the vicar of Christ, produced the same disastrous effect on Bishop Bodo as they did on Martin Luther about five centuries later. Bodo forsook Christianity and, sacrificing his friends and high position, went direct to Spain, where he embraced Judaism and adopted the name of Eleazer. This event created a great sensation at the time and, as Graetz says, is spoken of by the chronicler in as impressive a manner as extraordinary natural phenomena like comets and earthquakes. The Jews were indeed for a time generously protected by the Emperor, though he himself felt the occurrence deeply, but the implacable fury of the

¹ This can be seen by the violent anti-Jewish writings of Agobard, Bishop of Lyons, and of his successor Amolo.

clergy could only be expiated by the humiliation, if not the annihilation, of the Jews.

The first of a long series of Jewish persecutions arose at the beginning of the eleventh century through the conversion of Wecelinus, chaplain to the Duke Conrad, a relative of the reigning Emperor.

The expulsion of over 16,000 Jews from England in 1290 was also greatly due to the conversion of a Dominican friar, Robert de Reddinge. An eloquent preacher, he had studied Hebrew to enable him to convert the Jews from their own writings. But the Christian missionary became a convert to Judaism. He was circumcised and took the name of Hagin. When called upon to answer for his action, he defended his new faith with great warmth, but was handed over to the Archbishop of Canterbury for punishment. Robert de Reddinge probably escaped, but vengeance was wreaked upon the Jews for having been the indirect means of his conversion. The friars made common cause with the bigoted queen-mother Eleanor, and she did not rest until the Jews were delivered from their long agony of persecution by their complete expulsion from the country.¹

Outside the Christian area, Judaism still continued for a time to attract a considerable accession of proselytes. In Arabia and Abyssinia there arose several independent Jewish States, and one of them in the latter region maintained itself till some time in the eighteenth century.² It is impossible to say how much

¹ Graetz, *History of the Jews*, iii, p. 662 ff. Cf. also his *Geschichte d. Juden*, vii, note 11.

² The remnant of this people, called the Falashas, are now said to number about 100-200,000 souls. Although in a stag-

of the Mongolian race has been assimilated into Judaism,¹ but we know that for several centuries there existed near the shores of the Black Sea a powerful nation converted to Judaism—the Chazars.² The famous book of Judah Halevi, *Hakuzari*, which he wrote in connexion with their conversion, shows that there was then as much grateful satisfaction at these accessions to Judaism as there is now when we hear of the many thousands of Russians who have in masses voluntarily embraced Judaism within our own generation. Under favourable conditions the Jews have never repudiated those who would share their duties and privileges, and within the last half-century tens of thousands of pros-

nant state, this outlying branch, cut off long ago from the Jewish stem, yet retaining its individuality and, according to an unsympathetic eye-witness (Flad, *The Falashas*, p. 70), a morality superior to their surroundings, Christian and heathen, is an eloquent testimony to the sustaining power of the Jewish faith. The efforts that are being made to bring the Falashas under the vivifying influence of European Judaism will, it is to be hoped, be attended with the same good results as was the case with the community of the Beni-Israel in India, who, also very largely composed of proselytes, and though until lately separated from the main Jewish body, have now become an integral and useful part of Judaism.

¹ The information relating to this question is very scanty and widely scattered, but of great interest. Thus, R. Petachiah, a Jewish traveller in the twelfth century, relates how he saw ambassadors from a Tartar people in the mountains of Armenia, who came to Samuel ben Ali, the Gaon of Bagdad, to ask him to send Jewish teachers to their nation to instruct the people, since seven of their princes had resolved to embrace Judaism (Graetz, *Hist.*, iii. p. 453).

² Among those who pressed their religion on the heathen prince Vladimir of Kiev were also Jewish teachers, probably from the neighbouring Chazars; but the simplicity of Judaism could not compete with the barbaric splendour of Byzantine Christianity.

elytes have entered the Jewish fold.¹ But whether the missionary sentiment be dormant or whether, as in English-speaking countries, it tends to become active, it is always imbued with that large-hearted spirit with which Moses Maimonides and Moses Mendelssohn have re-asserted as an integral part of Judaism the old Talmudical maxim that all idealists, without distinction of creed, will share in the bliss of the future world.² The view of Judaism on the proselyte question is, therefore, based on the theory that there is no particular necessity for the non-Jew to embrace Judaism, for either he lives according to moral principles, when "faith" is not essential, or he lacks the moral consciousness, which cannot be replaced by mere faith.³

Recapitulating, we may say that Judaism was not to be a missionary religion, whose highest aim it was to bring the whole human race under its absolute sway, but a force which should ferment and generate many thoughts and aspirations tending to bring about the Kingdom of Heaven upon earth. As such, Israel is the people of Religion *par excellence*. This office of the mediator of religion is contained in the Abrahamic blessing, as well as in the corporate constitution of Israel as a kingdom of priests. As the oldest and most faithful guardian of ethical Monotheism, as the acknowledged source of Christianity and Mohammedanism, the only other monotheistic religions with a future,

¹ The number of conversions to Judaism at the present time is, on the whole, much larger than is generally supposed.

² "The pious of the nations of the world have a share in the world to come" (Sanhedrin, 105a). חסידים has in this case been appropriately rendered by Prof. Lazarus by "idealists," a term of which I have availed myself in the text here.

³ Lazarus, *Die Ethik des Judenthums*, i, p. 160.

Israel stands forth as the people chosen by God in the education of the human race. It is only in this sense, and in no other, that the pre-eminence claimed by Jews must be understood. The view that it possesses a tribal deity, giving His special protection to the Jews, both in this world and the next, to the exclusion of non-Jews, is an absurd theory and a mischievous atavism, which seems to cling even to those who have emancipated themselves from the thralldom of traditional Christian theology. Israel is truly the first-born son of God, not merely because God chose Israel, but because it was this people which voluntarily devoted itself to God.¹ Israel, it should also be noted, does not claim to be the only son of God, but the first-born only.

Judaism is the religion of Israel, but Israel is universal. Judaism is independent of race or country. In it have found salvation not only Semites, but millions of Aryan and other races.² The basis of Jewish unity, to use the words of Prof. Lazarus, is not to be found on earth but in heaven, not in a fatherland but in the Father above.³ Judaism has adapted itself to every clime, and the Holy One of Israel has been worshipped in the tongues of many nations. Judaism has, indeed, rarely forsaken to any serious extent the language of its Lawgiver, of its prophets, psalmists and sages, but it is its pride that the original language of its sources and records is made known to every son of the Covenant. The profession

¹ Cf. Deut. xxxiii. 2-4 (God loves all nations, but chose Israel) and the aggadic amplifications of this idea.

² This fact had given rise to the question as to whether the modern Jews can at all be regarded as Semites. It has notably been answered in the negative by Renan in *Le Judaïsme comme Race et comme Religion*.

³ Lazarus, *Die Ethik des Judenthums*, i, p. 28.

of Judaism is not conditioned by any particular stage of thought or civilization; Judaism has combated, and partly assimilated, the great philosophical systems from Plato and Aristotle to Kant; it is the common faith of the simple-minded Galician and Persian hawker as of the learned German Professor and brilliant French Academician.

There is only one agency in the history of humanity that can strictly be compared to Israel—ancient Hellas. Out of the little Greek peninsula there issued a stream of civilization which fructified many a tract of uncultivated land. The colonies which thus sprang up everywhere along the coasts of the Mediterranean and the Euxine, claimed the little country across the sea as their original home. Their common culture was the sole bond which united them. Thus also was it with Israel: all who accepted its heritage regarded themselves as of one brotherhood; all claimed descent from the people to which God had revealed Himself. As Athens became the chief city of the Greek world by reason of having produced the ripest fruits of Hellenic civilization, so in Israel the hegemony belongs to those who most distinguish themselves in scholarship and philanthropy.

But between Judaism and Hellenism there are at least two fundamental differences. The world-mission of Judaism is consciously altruistic. It knows of no *βάρβαροι*; on the contrary, viewed from the highest standpoint, the גוים (Gentiles) are inseparably connected with its very existence from the time when the divine promise came to Abraham: "והתברכו בורעך כל גווי הארץ" "And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed."¹

¹ Gen. xxii. 18.

While, again, the Greeks considered the beautiful co-extensive with the good and the true, if not paramount, there ever reigned over all phases of Jewish life and faith one supreme idea, which may be expressed in the well-known maxim of Boileau,—"Rien n'est beau que le vrai, le vrai seul est aimable."

These respective Greek and Jewish *Weltanschauungen* decided the fortunes of Hellenism and Judaism. When Hellenism became a material world-conquering power under Alexander the Great, it already bore the seed of death within itself. It gradually withered away in the absence of a life-sustaining element in its composition. Hellenism has risen again in Europe, but only as one of the enriching components of our civilization; as an independent organism it has no power of existence. Judaism was conquered by Hellenism by the arm of the flesh, but Hellenism was ultimately in its turn absorbed by the Jewish spirit. In this struggle for supremacy, the Jews were the few and the weak, the Greeks the strong and the many. Judaism prevailed because the fulfilment of the Mission of Israel does not require the support of numbers. In the course of the ages many dry leaves may drop off, but the old Jewish tree bears within itself an ever-renewed power of rejuvenation, for "holy seed is the substance thereof." ¹

¹ Isa. vi. 13.

CHAPTER VI

THE MISSIONARY ASPECT OF CHRISTIANITY

“ In that day shall Israel be the third with Egypt and with Assyria, a blessing in the midst of the earth : for that the Lord of hosts hath blessed them, saying, Blessed be Egypt My people, and Assyria the work of My hands, and Israel Mine inheritance.”
—*Isaiah* xix. 24, 25.

THE central point in the argument against Judaism as the religion ultimately destined to embrace the human race lies in the assumption that Judaism, confined to one people, is merely national, and therefore exclusive in its character. As an un-missionary (if not anti-missionary) faith, Judaism is taken to confess to the justice of the judgment thus passed upon it. God, it is rightly said, could not have intended that the truth should be restricted for ever within the narrow limits of a single people. The unique position of Judaism in the ancient world is granted as evident, but as Judaism failed in its mission to communicate to others the truths entrusted to it, its place has been taken by a religion universal in its scope, uniting the whole of humanity under its sway. Thus Christianity, as the successor of Judaism, claims to be fulfilling this function ; Mohammedanism, as the successor of Christianity as well as of Judaism, pretends that it has superseded its predecessors because of their exclusive and imperfect nature. Both Christianity and Mohammedanism

are intensely missionary ; each of them in its turn considers itself destined for universal dominion, and, therefore, as the ultimate expression of the Divine Will to the world.

However conclusive such an argument might appear at first sight, it nevertheless assumes an altogether different complexion when it is submitted to a detailed criticism of its practical working.

Both Christianity and Mohammedanism claim to be not only *a* religion, but *the* religion of the human race. With them there can be no question of legitimate rivals ; whoever is deliberately outside *the* religion can neither live according to the Will of God nor hope for His salvation. Here the Kingdom of God is circumscribed by the frontiers of the only true religion, outside of which is only the kingdom of Satan. We thus find that this striving after an absolute sway over all men is accompanied by corresponding limitations. History and experience teach us that the proselytizing spirit, which is bred by the craving after universality, generally engenders a tendency which develops into an indirect negation of human brotherhood. There is a lust of power in spiritual, as well as in material, realms, and the struggle for supremacy is even more profound and sustained, more fierce and uncharitable, in the former than in the latter. The missionary spirit of a religion is, therefore, anything but a test of its true universality. Roman Christianity may consider the title of Catholic as its greatest glory ; Mohammedanism may embrace in a common fellowship the most diverse races, yet in both these religious systems an extreme missionary ardour is intimately bound up with an equally extreme spirit of exclusiveness towards the

rest of mankind. In this instance it may be said that the one aspect supplies the measure of the other.

If we inquire into the propelling force in the spread of Christianity and Mohammedanism, we shall find that it was that particular temper best described as enthusiastic intolerance, which led these creeds from victory to victory. In their early history the enthusiasm of their followers rose to such a pitch that death lost its terrors and became invested with charms, which made the Christian deliberately court martyrdom, and the Mohammedan long to fall in the field of battle in the good fight for Islam. And this contempt for life itself was occasioned by the intense desire to extirpate false beliefs and to subdue everything to the power and glory of the one and only true faith. Such waves of enthusiastic intolerance were mighty in the extreme, and almost irresistible. Early Christianity worked itself into the fabric of the Roman Empire with a steady, irresistible advance, while the marvellous progress of early Mohammedanism can be compared to the overwhelming suddenness of a great natural catastrophe. Christianity in the sixteenth century supplies another instance, whether in the case of Protestantism or in that of the so-called counter-Reformation. But it must be specially noted that in these outbursts of religious enthusiasm intolerance played the chief part. To the Moslem as to the Christian, questions of love or humanity were of little moment in the spread of their religion; the stranger could only become their brother-in-faith, or remain their implacable foe.

Further still, the unbeliever, by reason of his unredeemed state, being considered spiritually and morally an inferior being, the believer too often claims a corres-

ponding superiority over his less favoured neighbour. Imbued with this lofty opinion of himself, the aggressive orthodox Christian, Catholic and Protestant, assumes a position in keeping with it, and the method of controversy adopted by him in his religious discussions with those who differ from him has been thus described by the masterly pen of the late Dr. Martineau :—

“ He assumes it as absolute fact, not merely that the ideas of Christ were true, but that his own are identical with Christ’s. He evidently imagines that he has possession of some certainty more than human, something much more secure than a probable opinion. He comes to me with the air, not of a man who desires to recommend a rational conviction, but of one who is charged with a message of inspiration. He calls himself an ambassador of heaven, and speaks as if he were ; he assures me that I am in the bondage of iniquity, and treats me as if I were. He tells me that he approaches me in the spirit of a divine love—which he proves by showing me no human respect. He brings me his own peculiar notions, which he denominates ‘ the truth of God that cannot lie ’ ; he proposes to eradicate mine, which he entitles ‘ delusions of Satan.’ His are the breathings of the Holy Spirit, mine the offspring of a carnal understanding. Instead of reasoning with me, he prays for me ; feeling, I suppose, that he has greater influence on the mind of God than on that of man.” ¹

On what grounds is based this presumption of the absolute and sole possession of the truth and of salvation ? It is nothing less than grotesque when we remember that, after all, ninety-nine of every hundred of these people have only inherited their enviable posi-

¹ *The Rationale of Religious Inquiry*, pp. 43, 44.

tion by being born in the particular Church for which they appropriate the fullest measure, if not a monopoly, of divine guidance and enlightenment, and that the hundredth has only passed from one form of Christianity to another ; that the overwhelming majority of Christians know almost nothing of any other religion than their own, and that the minute remainder derive their knowledge of other faiths from second-hand and prejudiced sources ; that, at best, a true appreciation of the religion of others, especially if their mode of thought and expression be foreign to us, is very imperfect, if not almost impossible ; that millions of human beings know nothing of Christianity, or have not even heard of it, and that, still more, Christendom itself, forming only a small minority of the race, is divided into numberless divisions and subdivisions, strenuously disputing and denying each others' pretensions. Here the Protestant is a heretic in the eyes of the Roman Catholic, with whom the latter only lives at peace by the sheer force of necessity and of the un-Catholic spirit of the times, and he, in his turn, is regarded by the Protestant almost as an idolator, the member of a corrupt Church ; the High Church Anglican, a mere schismatic from the Romanist point of view, looks with contempt, mingled with fear, on the Nonconformist, into whose chapel it would be a sin to enter ; the Greek Orthodox sect regards all others as ungodly disturbers of the Church of Christ, of which it is the only faithful representative. If, in addition to this, the views of the many shades of so-called evangelical Protestantism and of the innumerable minor sects were to be reduced to their real and logical meaning, it would have to be said of Christendom itself what Chrysostom declared of the Bishops

of his day : that the number of those who might be saved bore a very small proportion to those who would be damned.¹

But in order to test at its proper value the assertion that Christianity is the sole depository of truth, and that in Christianity alone can eternal salvation be found, it is only necessary to inquire into the manner in which this religion has been introduced among most of the European peoples professing it.

The Christians who first drew me into religious disputes, with the view of showing me their superiority in religious matters, were Esthonians, a small Finnish people in the Baltic provinces of Russia. The process by which the ancestors of my Esthonian friends attained the happy position in which their descendants are now placed by the accident of birth, is instructive for the present purpose. In the Middle Ages there was formed in the wake of German commercial and missionary enterprise in the regions of the Baltic Sea a religious military Order of Knights, the Brethren of the Sword (*Schwertbrüder*), whose main object it was to convert the heathen of the land. This the saintly army accomplished effectively. After a struggle, the Esthonians were either massacred, or German rule and Christianity were literally imposed on them by the sword. The German conquerors then submitted the Christian aborigines of the land to a degrading servitude which lasted well into the nineteenth century, when it was considered politic to liberate them from their crushing yoke. They did not share the culture brought by the Germans, who became known to the Esthonians as Saksad (Saxons), an appellation even now synonymous

¹ Gibbon, *Roman Empire*, iii, p. 504.

with both Germans and gentry. When at the time of the Reformation their German masters considered it right to turn Protestant, the Esthonians became so as a matter of course. Now, again, when the Lutheran confession common to German and Esthonian alike is oppressed by the Greek Orthodox Church, we have had the spectacle of wholesale conversions of Esthonians to the religion of their modern Russian rulers.

A few centuries before their invasion of the Russian Baltic provinces, the Saxons themselves became converted wholesale to Christianity, not out of a recognition of its truths, but simply by the might of Charlemagne's sword, and the same people afterwards became Protestant, or remained Catholic, according to the chances of war, the skill of their generals, or the policy of their princes.

It is remarkable that similar phenomena meet us as of the ordinary kind throughout the history of Christendom. Clovis, the first Christian predecessor of Charlemagne, owes his salvation to a mere chance, though it can be disputed how far he deserved being saved in spite of his conversion. He had married a Christian wife, the beautiful Clotilda, who incessantly urged her husband to accept her faith. When in a battle with the Alemanni the army of Clovis gave way, he implored Jesus to help him, and promised that if he won he would become baptized. Clovis conquered the Alemanni, and afterwards related the story of his promise to his wife, who at once sent for the Bishop of Rheims, asking him to influence the king that he should become converted. To this he agreed, and accepted baptism with 3,000 of his warriors, who were now, in the words of the Bishop, to adore that which they had burned and burn that

which they had adored.¹ The new faith of this "eldest son of the Church," as Clovis was called, did, by the way, very little to influence his life. "His ambitious reign," says Gibbon, "was a perpetual violation of moral and Christian duties; his hands were stained with blood in peace as well as in war; and as soon as Clovis had dismissed a synod of the Gallican Church, he calmly assassinated all the princes of the Merovingian race."² It is not less worthy of notice that the most treacherous acts of Clovis are related by the effusively pious Gregory of Tours with the utmost complacency, and, after relating a particularly aggravating case, he says approvingly: "Day after day God put his enemies in his hand and enlarged his kingdom, because he walked before the Lord with an upright heart and did what was agreeable in His eyes." This success of Clovis the historian ascribes to his merit in believing in the Catholic conception of the Trinity, as against the ruin in body and soul of the Arians, who asserted that, since the Son was born of the Father, the Father existed before the Son.³

Thus, then, was laid the foundation of the Christian State which has been, and, in spite of its intellectual and political renunciation of Christianity, still remains, a bulwark of the Roman Church. It is only necessary to relate the story of the conversion of the first Christian prince of the Russian Empire, now the powerful cham-

¹ It is instructive of the state of mind in which Clovis found himself on this solemn occasion that, when he heard from the priest the pathetic story of the passion and death of Jesus, he exclaimed furiously: "Had I been present at the head of my valiant Franks, I would have revenged his injuries!"

² *Roman Empire*, iv, p. 352.

³ Gregory of Tours, *History of the Franks*, books ii. and iii.

pion of Byzantine Christianity, in order to show how identically superficial were the reasons which led those savage kings to accept Christianity. Their simple subjects either embraced it because, as the Russian annalist Nestor puts it, they said that if the new religion were not good, their princes would not have accepted it, or the latter considered it as an affront to their authority if their vassals and serfs did not submit to the faith they had chosen for themselves. The existence of Judaism and of Roman and Byzantine Christianity in Kiev, led Prince Vladimir to recognize the barbarous character of the paganism prevailing there. He and the Boyars were particularly attracted by the gorgeous worship of the Greeks, which impression was intensified by the tales of merchants and ambassadors who had seen the glories of Tsargrad (Constantinople) and the splendour of the services in the great Cathedral there. When Vladimir asked for the hand of the sister of the mighty Emperors, they consented to the wish of their troublesome neighbour, with the stipulation that he should adopt their religion. On agreeing to this, Vladimir at once set about demolishing the statues of the old pagan deities, of whom he had only just been a zealous worshipper; the images were burned or broken in pieces, and the chief God Perun was attached to the tail of a horse and dragged from the mountain from where he was worshipped to the valley of the Dnieper; here he was belaboured with sticks and then thrown into the stream. Thereupon Vladimir had it proclaimed that whoever of the inhabitants of Kiev, rich or poor, should not on the following day appear on the banks of the Dnieper in order to be baptized would be regarded as an

enemy by him. When the next morning Vladimir and the priests went to the river, they found in it numberless people paddling about ; the priests recited the necessary prayers, and thus accomplished the conversion of the multitude. Although there seems to have been some opposition to the new faith on the part of the adherents of the pagan deities, the scene enacted in Kiev was the common process of converting the masses. The Lithuanians, a once powerful people, were likewise converted in this summary fashion. " They were divided into groups and the priests then sprinkled them with the holy water, pronouncing, as he did so, a name of the Latin Calendar; to one group he gave the name of Peter, the others Paul or John." ¹

These instances show sufficiently how the choice of a particular form of religion by heathen chiefs, who at the same time enforced it on their followers,² was generally due either to mere chance or policy, to a political alliance or a marriage ; and in the latter case, the Christian wife was, by the nature of her faith, anxiously concerned for the salvation of her husband's soul. It would not be fair to contend that there were never higher motives than these brought into play, and it may be readily admitted that in many fine souls, as is exhibited by the well-known story of the Anglo-Saxon thane's reflection on the fleeting life of man,

¹ Rambaud, *History of Russia*, i, p. 187.

² Döllinger says : " It is well to observe that conversion to Christianity was brought about by free choice only in the smallest degree, chiefly by compulsion and by the assistance of those means of intimidation and favour with which despotic rulers are able to enforce the triumph of a religious faith " (*Studies in European History*, p. 172).

there was a deep and sincere belief in the Christian ideal. The moral and intellectual qualities of the great Teutonic race, which have made the history of the English people an epic on the dignity of man, and have, to no inconsiderable extent, produced in the Germans a nation of thinkers and poets, were, no doubt, also frequently exercised in the service of religion, but it cannot be contended that the Germans and Anglo-Saxons had any other religious opportunities than those which were brought to them by the culture and prestige of Rome, or that these people were in a position to properly test the teachings of Christianity as it was offered to them. Even when, arrived at a state of manhood, they revolted against the Roman Church, only a reformation in its superstructure took place: the basis and form remained the same, because there was nothing else available.

There is a profound conception of the mutability and rule of chance in the dominion of religious profession in the remark of Gibbon that if the Saracens had conquered Charles Martel they would now have been expounding the Koran at Oxford and Cambridge to a circumcised audience. This is not a mere whimsical fancy of the great historian, but is quite borne out by the course of events described by him. Palestine, the scene of the life of the Christian Saviour, has remained Mohammedan, in spite of the most gigantic efforts of Christian nations to wrest it from the infidel. Not only Jerusalem, but the great cities like Antioch, Alexandria, Constantinople, places which played so important a part in early Christianity, where the new religion received its very name, developed and rose into power—they all, with the sole exception of Rome, have become

Mohammedan both in their government and dominant religion.

The almost total loss by Christianity of the immense territories in Asia and Africa, stretching from the Caspian Sea to the Straits of Gibraltar, is suggestive of several important considerations. The fact that the countries where Christianity was born, and where it grew into a world-religion, should be lost to it, in a religious sense at any rate, shows how delusive is the idea that Christianity is destined to supersede every other creed. Those Christians who base a large part of their evidence of the truth of their faith on the present dominant position of the nations professing Christianity, which is sometimes, as in Russia, only due to their military character, not only forget the saying of their master that his kingdom is not of this world, but also the lessons of history. There was a time when Christianity was perhaps only saved to Europe by the sword of Charles Martel and the heroism of John Sobieski, when the Mohammedans disputed with the Christians in the south of France and before the gates of Vienna the possession of the continent. There was a time when some bold Saracens went up to Rome and with impunity insulted the tombs of St. Peter and St. Paul, and carried away to Africa the silver altar of the former apostle. But, above all, the rapid, extensive and complete destruction of Christianity in Asia and Africa stands almost unparalleled in the history of religions. The great Nestorian Church, which is said to have surpassed in numbers the Roman and Greek Churches combined—that Church, which extended from Egypt to India and China, has shrunk before the advance of Mohammedanism to a small, mournful remnant of a few thousands.

By the action of the same force, the Donatists in North Africa, who once possessed about 400 episcopal sees, vanished almost suddenly from the face of the earth, and the world knows them no more.

Now, when the time for wholesale religious revolutions in the civilized and semi-civilized world seems to be past, we find that not only has Mohammedanism kept its ground in Asia and Africa, but its missionary successes among the heathen peoples inhabiting these continents are much greater than those of Christianity. While in India we find people going over in masses to Mohammedanism, no such claim can be put forward on behalf of Christianity. The Christian missionary in India belongs to a foreign, conquering race, a fact which by word and deed is on the whole not at all disguised by the evangelist. In North and Central Africa the Mohammedan trader is a far more efficient propagandist than the Christian missionary, and, by its better adaptive power, Mohammedanism makes much greater headway among the millions of the Dark Continent than does Christianity.

These facts become of far-reaching consequence when it is remembered that where once Mohammedanism has been planted among a people it withstands successfully the rivalry of Christianity. In spite of all efforts from the latter quarter, it is acknowledged that nothing is so barren as missions to Mohammedans. A candid Roman Catholic writer, speaking of Mohammedanism, has stated that "its converts during the last half-century, beyond all question, vastly outnumber those of Christianity. Nay, it has made far more proselytes from us than we have made from it." ¹

¹ Lilly, *The Claims of Christianity*, p. 37.

In the present state of transition in the culture and thought of Eastern Asia it is probably impossible to accurately test the power of life yet to be found in the indigenous religions of India, China, and Japan. We know, however, that some of them possess hundreds of millions of adherents with a powerful priesthood, and that they form part of an old civilization with which they have become inseparably intertwined. The studies that have been made by European scholars in their sacred books have only tended to heighten, if possible, the value and veneration of this literature in the eyes of its believers, and any religious reforms attempted are, for evident reasons, and even as a matter of honour and self-respect, pursued on the old lines. In India, the adaptation of the old Brahman faith to modern thought has resulted, among other developments, in the formation of the Brahma Somaj, a religious brotherhood with doctrines much akin to those professed by Judaism. As in India, so in Japan, the introduction of modern European civilization has engendered a prevailing intellectual opposition to official Christianity. In China the national mind is so averse to Christianity that, in spite of an immense missionary propaganda, the European religion is either a sickly growth, or, as in the case of Protestantism, almost a complete failure.

Not only does Christianity not occupy a predominant position in the religious world in point of numbers, but its immense and irreparable losses in the past, the effective opposition and rivalry it experiences at present, and, lastly, the dissensions and growing estrangement within, prove that the conception of an ultimately universal Christianity, imperatively claiming our allegiance, is a dream corresponding to no realities. The

traditional attitude of Christianity becomes quite untenable when it is applied to actual life. Thus, the invading hordes who were successful in massacring and dispossessing the original Christian inhabitants of Europe, became children of God, while those Mongols who either stayed at home in Asia or were unsuccessful in their invasion of Europe, remained with their descendants children of the devil. The Aryan Persian is now as practically debarred, by reason of his origin, from the blessings of Christianity, as the means of salvation are placed in the hands of the Aryan Frenchman. In fact, not so long ago, when the hundreds of millions of souls in China had never heard of the name of Christ, every human being in a Christian country at that time had to be saved, whether he liked it or not. In the midst of Christianity itself, we notice that its several large divisions have each a sphere allotted to it in Europe ; the East is, thanks to Russian despotism, Greek Orthodox, and, in spite of the great religious upheavals that have taken place in the West, the Northern portion of it, with its Teutonic peoples, is as preponderatingly Protestant as the Southern, with a Latin population, is decidedly Catholic. Those that are born in Spain are as strongly Catholic as those born in Sweden are Protestant. Even in the New World, where there has been gathered together a conglomeration of all European nationalities, Christianity in North America presents only a copy of that in Great Britain, while the religious conditions in Central and South America have all the peculiarities of those to be found in Spain and Italy.¹

¹ Locke has well pointed out this idea in the following words :
“ Have the bulk of mankind no other guide but accident and

We thus also observe that Christianity is as much subject to geographical and national influences and limitations as is, say, Mohammedanism.

The latter religion has, through various causes, not taken any abiding hold on peoples inhabiting Europe, but it has assimilated the civilized Persians and Hindus with the same ease as it has the negroes of Central Africa and the Tartars of China. Christianity has appropriated the Christian nations, to whom it has become practically synonymous with the conception of absolute religion, but there is no question but that it has not been found to answer the needs and modes of thought of just those races which have furnished the most numerous contingents to the believers of Islam. It is not necessary to pronounce on the relative merits of Christianity and Mohammedanism: it is sufficient to know that even the two most missionary religions are not actually universalistic, even in the sense in which it is understood by themselves. Each of them has a more or less defined and limited region where it has stamped or acquired the peculiar culture and civilization of the land. In fact, it may be laid down as an axiom that Christianity represents the religious expression of the Occident, as Mohammedanism

blind chance to conduct them to their happiness or misery? Are the current opinions and licensed guides of every country sufficient evidence and security to every man to venture his greatest concerns on? Or, can those be the certain and infallible oracles and standards of truth which teach one thing in Christendom, and another in Turkey? Or shall a poor countryman be eternally happy for having the chance to be born in Italy? Or a day labourer be unavoidably lost because he had the ill luck to be born in England?" (*Essay*, Book iv, ch. xx. 3).

does that of the Orient. Either of these creeds may invade the domain of the other, but the chances of conquest are distinctly unpromising. Christianity, in the shape of the Anglican Church, may perhaps obtain a footing among the Persians or Arabs, in Teheran or Mecca, but the native community that would be formed would be as unacclimatized and exotic as the Liverpool Mohammedan congregation (which is chiefly composed of, and conducted by, English converts), appears to the English Christian.

Just as Christianity bears the ineradicable stamp of a particular civilization, so the dogmas of that religion, which are proclaimed as eternal verities, are in reality the products of the culture of a certain age and of the problems which agitated that time. It is true, Christianity early acquired a very wide field for its activity when, from policy and circumstances, it accommodated itself to the Græco-Roman life and thought which were predominant in the missionary area of the first Christian propagandists, but that age has left its impress on Christianity for all time. The doctrines of Christianity were not only fashioned, but even generated, by the philosophical schools of that period, and thence proceeded those subtle problems which have troubled the religion of Christ from its infancy to the present day. The ineffable mysteries of the Christian faith are actually the offspring of the speculations of heathen Greek thinkers. Thus, for instance, the Logos, a creation of Hellenic philosophy, was not, as among the Alexandrian Jews, merely a metaphysical conception, but became one of the three Persons of the Godhead formulated by Christian theology. As the fountain of the Christian religion, so the ideas which flowed from

it, were conditioned by local intellectual forces, whose outcome they invariably were.¹

If the doctrines of Christianity were born from, and nourished by, Græco-Roman philosophy, so Christendom grew into manhood by the aid of the Græco-Roman Empire. The conversion of Constantine decided the political fortunes of Christianity, which was henceforth backed by the force of the world's greatest military power. The prestige and terror of the Roman name were utilized to the full by the Christian propagandists, who came also armed with the gentle and insinuating charms of Roman pagan civilization. The throne of the Cæsars in Rome was changed gradually into the see of St. Peter; the power of the one became almost imperceptibly transferred to the other, and the Christian priests became the legionaries of the new Roman Empire, which afterwards vastly enlarged its old boundaries and more than revived its ancient glories.

So long as the dominion of Rome was considered co-extensive with the civilized world, the new Roman religion shared the honour of the claim to this position. But, since our horizon has been widened, we have to recognize that the heirs of Rome, both eastern and western, are spiritually by no means the lords of the world. Great religions—great by reason of their innate qualities as well as by the numbers of their adherents—have opened themselves to our gaze, and we behold the wonders of a new heaven and a new earth. To

¹ Milman points out in regard to the conceptions of *Homoousios* and *Homoiousios*, the quarrels in connexion with which for a long time deluged Christianity with blood, that the Latin tongue—the language of Catholic theology—was not able to furnish terms to express this fine, peculiarly Greek, distinction. Cf. *History of Christianity*, ii, p. 446, note *e*.

few has it been given accurately to conceive the hidden potentialities of the teeming hundreds of millions of Eastern Asia, whose weakness lies only in the unconsciousness of their strength, and whose civilization is rich with the spoils of thousands of years.

Of these great manifestations of the human heart and mind, the universalistic ambitions of Christianity, as expressed in its outside missionary propaganda, have practically taken no cognizance. Here the opinion of St. Augustine that the virtues of the heathen are only splendid vices finds complete acceptance. The civilization of non-Christian peoples is considered almost as a contravention of God's purpose for the evangelization of the world. So much more stress is laid upon the forces of civilization which are at the command of the missionary ; on the one hand, on that intellectual element with which he is at open, and even deadly, warfare at home, and on the other, on that material aspect which is absolutely a direct negation of the Christian profession. Such has, on the whole, been the position of the Christian propagandist since he had a sword placed at his command. In olden times he relied on the prestige of the Roman name, on that Empire which had once been considered as the Anti-Christ, and in recent days we have had the propaganda of the greatest missionary Church in Christendom carried on in non-Christian lands under the protection of France, a country with a government frequently composed of men whose lives were spent in undisguised hostility to official Christianity. The work of the modern Christian missionary in China is as much indebted to the arm of the flesh, which he is quite ready to invoke, as the successes of Boniface in converting

the Germans were due to the invaluable material aid which he received from the Frankish kings, under whose special protection his labours were carried on.¹

There is, indeed, a bright side of the Christian missionary movement which, though likewise springing from the lust of spiritual power and from the rivalries of sects, has nevertheless carried life and hope into many dark places of the earth. It would be ungenerous not to acknowledge the immense saving and civilizing work, the rescue from barbarism, ignorance and sin, which has been effected by men who have taken their lives in their hands in order to bring eternal salvation to their fellow-beings, of whatever race, colour or civilization.

The missionary achievements of the Jesuits in the sixteenth, or of some Protestant apostles in the nineteenth century, present feats of heroism and self-sacrifice unsurpassed in any sphere of human activity.

But while cheerfully recognizing the general value of Christian missionary efforts among the heathen, it must not be overlooked that the heroism exercised in that field does not bear necessarily any greater proportion to that displayed in certain other phases of the religious or charitable life in our own midst. There is not to be found more self-sacrifice in the clergyman who goes out to form part of a missionary station among the heathen than is expected, and is so often met with, in the Christian pastor at home, working in all directions

¹ Boniface frankly acknowledged this: "Without the patronage of the Frankish ruler I can neither govern the people, nor defend the presbyters, deacons, monks or handmaidens of God, nor even could I forbid the pagan rites and sacrilegious idolatries in Germany without his mandate and the fear of his name." Quoted by Ranke, *History of the Popes* (Bohn's ed.), i, p. 12, note,

for the welfare of the flock he has been called to minister unto. Those, however, who gather their knowledge of Christian missionary activity from the appeals of missionary societies, or from the publications issued by them for the purpose of enlisting the moral and material aid necessary for their work, know next to nothing either of the difficulties or of the shady side of what is invariably so optimistically described. There is no branch of religious work in which vested interests play a more sordid part, and nowhere are rivalry and arrogance displayed with equal uncharitableness. The diplomatic etiquette with which any conflicting relations between the English and French Governments would be treated, is altogether absent in the normal attitude towards each other of the English and French missionary bodies who claim the protection of their respective national flags. There is, however, one similarity between the secular and spiritual organizations, and that is their land-hunger. It is of no consequence how arid the region may be which they appropriate in order to civilize or to evangelize ; it is considered of paramount importance to have wrested it from, or forestalled, the supposed covetous grasp of another Power. Hence the feverish activity of missionary work regardless of cost or energy ; hence, also, the necessity of investing the same with a romantic glamour which not infrequently covers a hideous reality.

This is more particularly evident in the propaganda which is carried on by Christian sects among one another, or among Mohammedans and Jews. Of course, the spreading of a knowledge of Christianity, or of a particular view of it, among those who are opposed to the same, must be pronounced entirely legitimate if it is done by

means of the pen or of the living voice ; naturally, there are few who like to see attacked views held by them as sacred, but it is too much to ask that religious opinions should not be subjected to the same fair criticism which is applied to all our theories and practices. The test of criticism, like that of public opinion, is beneficial, even though it might at first be unripe and misdirected. But in no department of life should we tolerate for a moment the methods which are adopted in the missionary work of Christian sects among civilized people. The insuperable difficulties which present themselves to the conversion of such men by the numerous bodies who cater for their salvation might be expected to have driven the agents engaged in this task to sheer despair, were it not that their patience and hope are boundless. The conversion of Mohammedans to Christianity is acknowledged by competent authorities to be a hopeless undertaking,¹ yet who appears braver than the missionary entrusted with this duty ? To the ordinary observer the adoption of Christianity by the Jews has remained to this day the same pious hope which has been indulged in by Christians from the earliest age of their religion, but here again the missionary takes a cheerful view of the whole question. Nothing is more instructive as to the insincerity or ignorance displayed by this complacent attitude, nothing more condemnatory of the activity of Christian missions to Jews, than the perusal of a missionary periodical of, say,

¹ “ La semence de l'Évangile n'a jamais levée sur la terre de l'Islam ” (Forget, *L'Islam et le Christianisme dans l'Afrique Centrale*, p. 13). The difficulties of Mohammedans seem to begin with the settled idea that Islam has superseded Christianity—a line of thought generally adopted by Christians towards Judaism.

50 or 100 years ago. The glowing accounts then given of the imminent dissolution of Judaism and of the promising Christian harvest which would soon be gathered in that field, will have been found to have been totally falsified. In spite of inevitable defections, it will be admitted that Judaism has emerged from the nineteenth century vastly stronger in numbers, self-consciousness and prestige than it was at its beginning. Nevertheless, the seed of hope was sown by Christian propagandists with a serene assurance as to the fruits it would produce; now and again some enthusiast makes an attempt at statistics, when he does not blush to include among the victories of the Church those Jews who have notoriously entered the Christian communion with a blasphemous lie on their lips, those who have forsworn their ancestral faith because of the social oppression and ostracism of their Christian rulers or Christian neighbours, or because of the weakness of the flesh inherent in all of us.

Much more serious, however, than the insincerity which accompanies this propaganda are the methods by which it is too frequently maintained. If the most enlightened and impartial Jews, Irish or Italian Catholics be asked as to the procedure of the Protestant agencies which work for their conversion, there will be one unanimous reply of utter condemnation. The maxim that the end justifies the means is largely put into practice, and here the only difference between the Protestant and the Catholic Jesuits is the want of success among the former. For the sake of ensuring a conversion, no scruples are made in attacking the sacredness of the family tie: the child is set against its father and brother against brother, so that there is

often a terrible fulfilment of the word of Jesus : " Think not that I am come to send peace on earth. I came not to send peace but a sword." ¹

The favourite method of reaching " inquirers " by combining a pseudo-philanthropy with propagandist aims is a prevailing feature in all poor quarters of Jewish centres ; in fact, among unprincipled Jews, the missionary is regarded as a man with vast resources and as one who in case of need can always be relied upon. The missionary who uses dispensaries, hospitals, homes and other " charitable " institutions, as well as large funds at his disposal, to win converts, may consider that he possesses the best means for attaining his object, but those who benefit by them, as well as those beyond his reach, can only feel the deserved contempt for this trafficker in souls—a contempt which must attach to the creed of which he is a chosen exponent and champion.

Still, it might perhaps be thought in certain circles that these measures have considerable advantages over such as were manifested by wars and persecutions ; they lend themselves to a better construction than the short and easy methods of conversion generally in vogue in former days, and that if, in the present mode, there is room for improvement, there is the paramount importance of the Christianization of the world which has to be considered. In this connexion it is forgotten that among non-Christian civilized people there is a

¹ Matt. x. 34, ffg. Such a standpoint may appear very heroic in the eyes of those who consider themselves called upon to inflict the injury, but their view of the matter certainly undergoes a total change when it is applied to themselves. Here, if anywhere, should be applied the great maxim : " Do not unto others as ye would not that others should do unto you."

public opinion on the character and actions of Christianity—a fact which ought to be taken into account by those whom it may concern.

The unjustified optimism of the Christian missionary has by his attitude been communicated to the entire body of Christians, where there exists a comfortable assurance that the whole world is standing still in order to allow Christianity to win its battles, and that it needs only to fight in order to be certain of victory. Against this false view of things, Dr. R. N. Cust, an experienced and influential missionary writer, has raised his voice in a remarkable lecture he delivered on the "Difficulties of Missions."¹ We are reminded by him that the number of non-Christians was much greater at the end of the nineteenth century than it was at the beginning. "India may be taken as a fair test, as we have a decennial census: the population has increased between 1881 and 1891 by thirty millions, or three millions per annum. The result of the labour of Christian missionaries of every kind during the last three hundred years, the old Syrian Church, the Church of Rome, and Protestants, does not reach three millions, and this includes all the British soldiers and the European population. The annual dead weight of non-Christians increases by the generation of children and preservation of life; for the great *Pax Britannica* of nearly one century has put down, or restricted, the influence of war, famine and pestilence; there is no immigration into India, but

¹ Dr. Cust, in spite of his endeavours to further the cause, says: "It may be disheartening to listen to my words; but I am not addressing an ordinary missionary meeting, in the emotional way so common, nor with the purpose of making a collection" ("Difficulties of Missions," in *The Gospel Message*, p. 331).

annually the pagan tribes of the hills, without any attempt at conversion, gravitate into the great reservoirs of the Hindu and Mohammedan systems, because they are indigenous. Christianity is presented as an exotic from Europe and in a non-Asiatic form. And yet enthusiasts talk and write of the conversion of the population of the great globe within a near future! ”¹

Apart from any criticisms that may be directed against the prospects and methods of Christian missionary work—which, by the way, is not to be regarded as one combined effort for the evangelization of the world, but as a conglomeration of many mutually hostile and exclusive elements, only drifting into the same direction²—such a work must not be mistaken for the highest expression of universalism in religion. Indeed, it would be erroneous to regard Christianity as intrinsically world-conquering. It has been such only since the sixteenth century, when Roman Catholicism, losing its hold upon the most valuable parts of Europe, sought to recoup itself by an extended activity beyond this continent; Greek Catholicism was practically satisfied to confine any manifestation of propaganda, which now is largely dictated by political motives, within its own sphere of influence;

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 320.

² According to Dr. Cust, there were thirty-one Christian denominations represented in British India, and these, more or less antagonistic, were rather increasing than diminishing in number (*ibid.*, pp. 471, 472). “Each denomination thinks its own views the right ones, and regards with pity the errors of its neighbours; of course, the Church of Rome justifies every form of proselytism, and would sooner leave the people in their native heathen state than allow them to become Protestants. The Protestants lose no opportunity of saving the soul of a poor deceived Romanist” (*ibid.*, p. 475). Protestants are also, we are told, not free from the tendency to proselytize among the other Protestant denominations.

and the foreign missions of the Protestant sections are generally of recent date, and to no inconsiderable extent more the effect of denominational jealousy than of love for the negro or Chinese heathen. And, after all, whatever may be the theory, the idea of the equality between the white and coloured Christian is not attempted to be carried into effect, in this world at any rate. It is a very significant commentary on the claim of universality made by Christianity that the most widely extended, and only unnationalized, Church in Christendom tacitly and persistently refuses to apply the pretended equality of the various divisions of mankind in a field where it is absolutely unhampered by social, racial, or any other impediments: no coloured Bishops are being appointed by the Roman Catholic hierarchy to represent the head of the Church, even among their own racial brethren.

There is no Christian denomination which by its very constitution is not bounded by local limitations. The Protestant sects owe their birth to the idiosyncrasies of the particular nationality among which they were elaborated or adopted. The Anglican Church was fashioned by the caprice of kings whose utter moral incompetency to decide as to the terms on which their subjects should obtain eternal salvation is notorious, and to this day the ruler of England, whatever be his qualifications, is considered by the great Anglican Church to be on earth the official head of that communion. The creation of the other prominent Protestant sections, the Lutheran, Presbyterian, Wesleyan Churches, is due entirely to some local convulsion, and their character has been determined by the nature of these events. Lutheranism, in its origin and govern-

ment, is as German as Wesleyanism is English, and it is difficult to think that any Turk or Chinaman could, with the best intentions, feel a particular enthusiasm or predilection for any of these divisions of Christendom. As for the Greek Orthodox Church, the self-appointed headship of the Tsars of the Russian national Church is not in the least conditioned by the personal character of the occupant of the Russian throne ; he governs the Church, as he rules the army, as one of the institutions of the country ; he is, in an indirect way, in a position to determine the tenets and formulas by which his Orthodox subjects can alone be saved, so much so that in the eyes of his government a Russian of the Orthodox faith could, until recently, no more lawfully forswear his religion than his allegiance to the Tsar. Roman Catholicism is indeed, with greater justice than any other Church, able to advance a claim to the universality of its sway, but the government and institutions of the Romanist Church do not permit any such assumption to be made good. Not only are the highest dignities of the Church withheld from so-called inferior races, but the European peoples are by no means all equally acceptable to the Church. Here, as well as in any other similar body, but more unjustifiably, geographical and national prejudices are allowed full play. Just as Roman Christianity was evolved out of the Roman Empire, and the Popes succeeded and imitated the Emperors ; just as in other respects the city of Rome was under both régimes regarded as the mistress of the earth and Latin as the official language, so we find that to the present day the citizens of Italy take an altogether disproportionate share in the governing of the Roman Catholic realm.

In fact, it may be said without exaggeration that the Roman Church is very largely an Italian institution, directed by an overwhelmingly Italian administration. This is notably evident by the representation of the various nations at the Vatican. In 1899, Italy had 30 cardinals, while Germany and the British Empire had only 3 each, France 8, Austria-Hungary 5, Spain 4, Portugal 2, and of the 12 new Cardinals created in April, 1901, as many as 10 were Italians. The Italian majority in the Sacred College over all the other nations was then 13, numbering as they did 27 out of a total of 40. This extraordinary preponderance of the Italian element at the Vatican has also led to the result of giving Italy a majority among the Saints. The office of Prefect of Propaganda—the next in importance to the position of Pope—has, with only one exception, been for centuries held by an Italian. But still more striking is the absolute monopoly which the Italians have possessed for hundreds of years in providing the successors of St. Peter. Ever since the time of Adrian VI (1522) the Pope has always been an Italian, and it almost appears as if the Roman saying, that since the sixteenth century the Holy Ghost has not crossed the Alps, will become in the future one of the tacit rules in the election of the Vicars of Christ.¹

The consideration of the whole question in all its phases shows that one of the fundamental errors of

¹ The ultramontane character of Roman Catholicism is an internal question which has long troubled that Church, but the determined opposition on the part of the authorities in Rome to anything which may tend towards decentralization has been successful hitherto. Now, as at all times, those who object to the tutelage of the Italian rulers of the Church, have no remedy but to leave it.

historic Christianity lies in the assumption that the grasp of an exclusive spiritual, and a consequent material, dominion, expressed by a proselytizing activity, represents the highest manifestation of religion. The great test is here not the measure in which the necessity and freedom of human fellowship is generally recognized, but the willingness to extend it to as large as possible a number of individuals who shall think and act in unison in matters of faith. In addition, it is assumed that God loves the world, but only so far as it believes in Christ and is thereby actually not of the "world," while those, on the other hand, who are not believers are sons of perdition, as Jesus is made to say in a prayer for his disciples: "I pray for them. I pray not for the world, but for those whom Thou hast given me; for they are Thine."¹ This attitude becomes already evident in Paul, though in him there did not yet appear some of its more objectionable aspects. The imminent dissolution of the world which he preached was naturally of concern to every living soul, but he feels assured that his gospel of *saue qui peut* will only benefit his few brethren in Christ, and that, with this infinitesimal exception, the world is doomed. With the growth of the new religion the same conception was tenaciously maintained. The Roman Empire, with its greedy hands stretched out to crush every free people within its grasp, was succeeded by the Roman Church, jealously suppressing every sign of life and thought which was not absolutely controlled by it. The priestly dignitaries of this Church have ever believed that it is in their power to grant, or refuse, the blessings of religion, and that God would undoubtedly support all they did; nay, in thus being able to command His Will,

¹ Cf. John xvii. 9 ff.

they shut out from His presence all those who do not unquestioningly bow under the yoke of that ecclesiastical institution. No virtue, no sacrifice on behalf of Christ himself, not even martyrdom for the sake of his name, could in the least expiate "the sacrilege of schism which surpasses all wickedness" (St. Augustine), and the assumption that God could be approached, not necessarily direct, as in Judaism, but even through the sole intervention of Christ, is most strenuously denied by the Roman Church. "He can no longer have God for a Father," said St. Cyprian in a classical passage, "who has not the Church for a Mother. If any man was able to escape who remained without the Ark of Noah, then will that man escape who is out of doors beyond the Church."

If this view of the scope of the Church could, of course, not be maintained, and had even to be attacked, by the Protestant confessions, nevertheless, as with so many other Romanist ideas and doctrines, they have been accepted with some modifications. This could not well be otherwise. Christianity stands for the dualistic division of humanity into the children of God and the children of the devil, and the words of the apostle: "We know that we are of God and the whole world lieth in wickedness," certainly expresses the historic attitude of the Church. The position thus adopted by it towards the world outside its borders has, no doubt, had the advantage of consolidating and spreading the Christian faith (though we could not measure the moral and material losses which have resulted through the carrying out of a policy based on these lines), but it can surely lay no claim to being the noblest ideal of our trust in God and love of our fellow-men. The most

precious achievement of our modern age is freedom of conscience—a first principle which has been developed out of the recognition of the innate goodness to be found in man and of the equal striving of all creeds to attain the highest. It is almost a truism to say that the progress of mankind is not necessarily advanced by one religious system only. On the contrary, the rivalry of creeds, in all the aspects where they touch human needs, is a powerful factor for good, one sect acting upon the other as a lever stimulating to greater effort, each in its own sphere endeavouring to reach its highest ideal. The existence of powerful religious bodies side by side renders exclusiveness and arrogance innocuous and absurd. This is completely borne out by every-day experience. In Germany, where the two great sections of Western Christendom are checked by each other, there is much more freedom of development for Roman Catholicism than there is in France, where it is numerically the ruling faith. It is not the least worthy of notice that in countries like England and the United States of America, where that denomination is in a minority, it has practically abandoned its well-known feature of hostility towards those outside its pale. In England, where there is a healthy competition among the numerous sects, every form of religion which justifies its existence by earnestness and social work is met with respect on all sides. Far different is the attitude towards religion where the dominant Church has, for fear of competition, shut out every other religious manifestation. In Russia, the official denomination, which stands unimpeachable by any one, has never been more than a barbarous superstition to the ignorant and a conventional sham to the cultivated classes.

In Italy and Spain, where Roman Catholicism held, until recently, absolute sway over every institution of the national life, the Church has reaped a harvest of contempt and hatred amidst peoples seething with atheism and anarchy.¹

Nowhere has the justification of the existence of the galaxy of great religions been more readily and fully recognized than in Judaism. Already in early Jewish literature we find numerous indications that although God chose Israel for His instrument yet He loved the other peoples and His light shone upon all.² The prophet Malachi, in reproving his wayward people, boldly proclaims that God does not require their worship, for under whatever name the Supreme may be called upon in the supplication and adoration of the world, they are all directed to the glory of the Eternal: "From the rising of the sun even unto the going down of the same My name is great among the heathen; and in every place incense is offered unto My name, and a pure offering: for My name is great among the heathen, saith the Lord of Hosts."³ The later Jewish teachers were often eager to prove in their discourses and parables that it was only by the special willingness of Israel to hearken to the Lord that He communicated to them the commandments of the Torah, but it was thought that

¹ In this connexion, the endeavour of Roman Catholicism to impose its yoke upon Protestant England is characteristic of the tendency of Christian missionary propaganda. Here it is not the virtues of flourishing England, its upright and religious character, which are considered by the Italian Church; but the fact that every good is of no avail if not accompanied by that faith, which, after all, has proved itself so impotent in its own home.

² Deut. xxxiii. 2, 3.

³ Mal. i. 11.

God had nevertheless proclaimed the Ten Words from Mount Sinai in every language of mankind, so as to be understood by all. It was again and again pointed out that purely moral principles were not merely enjoined on the Israelite, but on man generally, and, at the time of the rise of Christianity, R. Jochanan ben Zaccai said that as sacrifices reconciled Israel with God, so the works of love of the heathen were the means of bringing them nearer to Him.¹ With such views of the relations of mankind to God, Judaism gradually accommodated itself to the existence of the hostile daughter-religions—those two streams of living water which, as in the vision of Zechariah,² issued from Jerusalem and were to overflow all the earth. The greatest minds of medieval Judaism, Maimonides and Judah Halevi, explained in their religious philosophy that Christianity and Mohammedanism were the agencies appointed by God to gradually bring the human race to a true knowledge of Him, and modern Jewish theologians have completely adopted this opinion. The Jews are represented as “a kingdom of priests,”³ and Judaism, therefore, as the mediating element by which the word of the Lord is, in the purest form, transmitted to the world, and as the communion in which His Will is most faithfully carried out.

Judaism believes in the peaceful working of the spirit of God in the advancement of the human race,⁴ and is,

¹ *Baba Bathra*, 10*b*. ² *xiv.* 8, 9. ³ *Exod.* *xix.* 6.

⁴ The following prayer may, I think, be fittingly given here as an expression of the Jewish hope in the coming of the Kingdom of Heaven: “We therefore hope in Thee, O Lord our God, that we may speedily behold the glory of Thy might, when Thou wilt remove the abominations from the earth, and the idols will be utterly cut off, when the world will be perfected under the Kingdom of the Almighty, and all the children of flesh

therefore, distinctly against the practice which sets out to conquer the brotherhood of man by the sword. While refusing admission to no one who wishes to enter its fold, Judaism strenuously opposes the inconsistencies which underlie the force of proselytizing propaganda, fully recognizing that the aim of the missionary is not primarily directed to the moral salvation of the convert, but only to his subjugation to a particular *credo*. Judaism feels that, in spite of diversity in religious profession, which is, after all, practically determined by accident, the moral consciousness is present in every human being, and that a belief in particular dogmas could add little to this supreme guide.¹

This, then, is the difference between the Christian and the Jewish ideal of the universality of their religions. Christianity seeks it in the complete subjugation of all to Christ as the only Saviour, and to his religion as the undisputed rule of faith and conduct. Judaism concedes the divine mission of the great world-religions, and, faithfully adhering to its own appointed task, has an unquenchable trust in the unswerving purpose

will call upon Thy name, when Thou wilt turn unto Thyself all the wicked of the earth. Let all the inhabitants of the world perceive and know that unto Thee every knee must bow, every tongue must swear. Before Thee, O Lord our God, let them bow and fall ; and unto Thy glorious name let them give honour ; let them all accept the yoke of Thy Kingdom, and do Thou reign over them speedily, and for ever and ever. For the Kingdom is Thine, and to all eternity Thou wilt reign in glory ; as it is written in Thy Law, the Lord shall reign for ever and ever. And it is said, And the Lord shall be King all over the earth : in that day shall the Lord be One and His name One " (*Daily Prayer Book*, Singer, pp. 76, 77).

¹ Cf. *supra*, p. 105.

of God in the uplifting of those He has created in His own image. Christianity proclaims the salvation of the believing, self-conscious sinner, Judaism the ultimate happiness of all who strive for righteousness according to the highest light that is implanted in them. If we were to seek for formulas to express clearly the respective positions, we may quote on the Christian side the classic declaration of Paul: "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one *in Christ Jesus*,"¹ and then on the part of Judaism the words of the Midrash: "I call upon heaven and earth as witnesses that be it a non-Israelite or Israelite, man or woman, manservant or maidservant, according to their deeds the holy Spirit rests upon them."²

¹ Cf. the analogous statement by Philo, *supra*, p. 96.

² Tanah debe Eliyahu, on Judges iv. 4.

CHAPTER VII

THE OLD COVENANT AND THE NEW

“And yet for all that, when they be in the land of their enemies, I will not reject them, neither will I abhor them, to destroy them utterly, and to break My covenant with them : for I am the Lord their God.”—*Leviticus* xxvi. 44.

To estimate properly the fundamental difference between Judaism and Christianity, it is essential to understand the characteristic forces which underlie the birth and growth of each of these religions. In comparing the historic developments of Judaism and Christianity, there is nothing more remarkable than the different lines which have been uniformly adopted by both of these systems in their struggle for life, whether it be in the evolution of principles of faith or in demonstrating the justification of existence. Judaism has shown itself positive and pacific, Christianity destructive and aggressive. These respective tendencies will be found to prevail in all phases of life and thought. What could be more striking than a comparison in this direction between the records of early Judaism and those of primitive Christianity, between the distinctively Jewish and Christian Bibles? In the one we have presented to us the unvarnished and unpartisan tale of the achievements and failings of Israel; while on the other side are described the life of Jesus and the doings of his apostles in such a way as to bring out the particular

lessons and dogmatic teachings which the dominant section of the Church at the time wished to see adopted. Some of the sacred books of Judaism were no doubt also written with the object of edification or to accentuate certain aspects of the religious life; nevertheless these attempts were constructive in their purpose. The sacred books of Christianity stand in direct contrast to this position. The Gospels, Epistles, etc., are not the faithful records of the acts of Christ and of his community, but party pamphlets combating, directly or indirectly, current opinions within and without the body of believers, and shaping facts and fancies to suit the occasion. This is at once evident if we place side by side the Jewish and Christian accounts of the beginnings of all things—in the one case represented by the creation of the universe, the other centring in the position of Christ in the Divinity—as they are depicted respectively in the introductory passages of Genesis and the Gospel according to St. John. In the one we have a plain statement that God created the heavens and the earth out of chaos: “And the Lord said, Let there be light, and there was light.” On the Christian side, it opens with an argumentative, pseudo-philosophical discourse on the nature of God, and continues with a tirade against those who do not believe it.

This outline is indicative of the position of Judaism and Christianity towards the world and towards each other. The fact that Judaism stands on its own ground and that Christianity disputes everybody else's, must necessitate different points of view from which to criticize these religions, in order to observe them each in the right perspective. The justification of the appearance of Christianity is not the absence of divine truth in the

world, but the claim of absolute superiority of its life and faith over everything which had preceded it, and without which the world would have been utterly lost. Christianity, especially as it is enunciated in the Sermon on the Mount or the Gospel of St. John, stands as the anti-thesis of Judaism, as having superseded it by reason of the higher standard of faith and morals proclaimed by Jesus Christ. In conformity with such an attitude, we have to judge not so much whether Judaism is able to guide its adherents through a good and godly life, but whether, with the presumed failure of Judaism, Christianity has taught and maintained a nobler ideal among its believers.

That Judaism is able to guide its adherents through a good life is, indeed, hardly disputed, but if the words of Jesus: "I say unto you, that except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of heaven,"¹ are to be accepted to mean what they plainly convey, it is essential to know whether Christianity does not only claim in theory, but has also maintained in practice, an ideal above that to be found among the people of Israel.

This idea has almost instinctively been grasped by Christian apologists, for it is evident that, unless Christianity could show that it was in reality the light and Judaism the darkness, there is lost the purpose of the alleged incarnation of God in a man, and the whole "scheme" for the redemption of the world falls to the ground; Christianity would then at best only appear as one of the numerous other agencies of the Divine Will.

Judaism is, therefore, declared as merely the pre-

¹ Matt. v. 20.

cursor, preparing the path for the advent of Christ, and that with his appearance its mission came to a definite and absolute end. The believer in the Gospel of Christ is considered to stand incomparably higher than the follower of the Torah of Moses, and we are told that "in revealed knowledge, in illimitable hope, in conscious closeness of relationship to his Father and his God, the humblest child of the New Covenant is more richly endowed than the greatest prophet of the Old." ¹

It is interesting to pursue the uniform trend of thought with which the birth of Christianity is introduced by Christian writers. Of course, as the basis of the new religion, Judaism is discussed in the various relations which it bore to the age, but great care is taken, on the one hand, not to put its achievements on too high a level, and, on the other, to emphatically point out its shortcomings, notably in such directions in which the Church is assumed to have excelled. Once this task accomplished, a determined attempt is made by the Christological historian to bury the Jews and Judaism, so that their presence should no longer haunt him in his course.

In order to maintain a justification for this attitude, the Christian theologian utilizes for his purpose certain traits and events within Judaism. For instance, one of the striking characteristics of the Jewish Scriptures is the severe treatment they accord to the people from which they emanate. The failings of Israel, its hardness of heart and many sins, are the constantly recurring themes of its prophets. Judaism has never repudiated the ancient idea ² that the punishments inflicted by God upon Israel were to be the greater just because, more

¹ Farrar, *Life of Christ*, i. p. 294.

² Amos iii. 2.

than any other people, it had been favoured by Him in the knowledge of right and wrong. The calamities and sufferings which have befallen the Jews are not considered as the work of an arbitrary fate, but "because of our sins." But this feature of the Jewish sacred records has rendered plausible reasons for the condemnation of the Jews, with a demand for the abolition of the Old Covenant on account of its manifest failure, and the establishment of a new dispensation, which, free from the limitations and imperfections of the "Law" of Moses, was to introduce the grace and truth which came by Jesus.¹

Yet with such a norm of religious development, Christianity has never applied the same measure to itself. The principles which, according to the Christian view, brought about the abrogation of the Jewish Covenant, have likewise been recognized, and put into effect, by Mohammedanism, which claims for the Arabian Prophet the office of "Comforter," who, as Jesus promised to his disciples, would come after him, and "reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment."² With historic justice, Islam points to the degraded state of Christianity in the seventh century, and to its failure to carry out its appointed mission. Of course, Christians reject with contempt and scorn the idea that Mohammedanism superseded Christianity; indeed, the abrogation of the Covenant of Christ would be considered by Christians as beyond the range of possibility, or even of discussion. Unlike Jewry, Christendom owns to no sins of which it has been guilty. It is only in sectarian quarrels that failings are discovered which prove the condemnation of the rival. Roman Catho-

¹ John i. 17.

² Ibid., xvi. 8.

licism knows of no crimes to repent of ; it is only from Protestant quarters that we are reminded of the fatal failure of Romanism to represent in spirit and in truth the Church of Christ. Nor does a Protestant, after having pronounced such judgment on the errors and failings of the most important section of the Christian faith, find anything serious with which to charge his own particular sect ; for this we should have to seek in unfriendly sources.

The different value which Judaism and Christianity assign to the study of their own past is characteristic of these religions. While Judaism demands from every one of its adherents a knowledge of the Torah and of its institutions, and the history of Israel, post-biblical as well as biblical, is being utilized for the purposes of exhortation and edification, in Christianity, ecclesiastical, as distinguished from biblical, history is a neglected subject, despised by the cultured and unknown to the masses.¹ The average Catholic is, therefore, fed on legendary lives of the saints, and the Protestants, forced to reject the whole development of the Church Universal, confine themselves to the biblical origins of Christianity according to the interpretations of Reformed theologians. As the reading of the Bible is discouraged among Catholics, so the study of the history of the Church is avoided in Protestant circles. There is a just recognition on both sides of the dangers involved ; in the one case, that the words of Jesus and of his apostles

¹ It has been pointed out by Cardinal Newman that " the chief, perhaps the only, English writer who has any claim to be considered an ecclesiastical historian is the unbeliever Gibbon." The Cardinal added that " to be deep in history is to cease to be a Protestant."

would bear evidence against the Church, and in the other, that its history would be a running commentary on the failure of Christianity to live up to its extravagantly superior professions.

The high-strung professions, and the failure to carry these out, are evident from the earliest period of the Church. It is, indeed, most probable that the noble ethical ideas inherent in the religion raised the primitive Christian communities morally much above the general heathen surroundings, and that the generous enthusiasm produced by the birth of every great spiritual or social effort also operated on numerous men and women who sought salvation in the nascent Christian faith. In spite of the popular assumption, however, there is sufficient indication to show that the apostolic age was by no means free from corruption and vice. In considering this subject we have not only to remember the shrewd suggestion of Gibbon that the virtues of the primitive Christians, like those of the first Romans, were very frequently guarded by poverty and ignorance,¹ but also that Christianity served as a city of refuge to many who were outcasts of society. While this fact, far from being a ground for reproach, undoubtedly constitutes one of the strongest claims of Christianity, and has furnished some of the brightest chapters of its history, it yet lies in the nature of the case that many doubtful elements must have entered the Christian body. The eclectic character of primitive Christianity gave it points of contact with the various religious and philosophical opinions then floating about, and the unsettled state of men's minds at that time brought the new faith many converts, to whom its ethical character

¹ *Roman Empire*, ii. p. 45.

was quite a secondary consideration. The testimonies we have to this effect from the pagan writers of the first three centuries would prove very unfavourable to, if not utterly condemnatory of, the reputation of the early Christians, were it not that the views of those accomplished men lose all their value by the ignorance and carelessness they display in the matter, not to speak of the untrustworthiness of men whose judgments had been warped by blind hostility towards a movement they had not even taken the trouble to investigate at first hand. But, in spite of the apologetic tone of the New Testament writings, the primitive Christian literature furnishes ample proof of the many difficulties which the apostles had to contend with in repressing the evil propensities of the black sheep in the fold, and even of the indulgence with which the vices of the weaker brethren were regarded in some of the Christian communities.¹ The frequent injunctions of the apostolic writers against gross vices, the reproofs directed against many sins, show that the first Christians were as freely conquered by temptation as the Israelites of old, and that the Gospel could not make man immune from evil any more than did the Torah. Such catchwords as spirit, grace, liberty, the yoke of the Law, etc., so freely indulged in by the early Christian propagandists, were sometimes interpreted in a sense hardly expected by them, leading their disciples to consider themselves free from the restraints imposed on men still living

¹ "It is reported commonly that there is fornication among you, and such fornication as is not so much as named among the Gentiles, that one should have his father's wife. And ye are puffed up, and have not rather mourned that he that hath done this deed might be taken away from among you" (1 Cor. v. 1, 2).

in the "darkness" of the Mosaic Dispensation. The true value of the energetic denunciation of the Law, and of the extravagant claims for the effect of the new Covenant made by the followers of Paul, are sufficiently illustrated by the necessity for such pathetic appeals to them by their leaders: "You have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion of the flesh;" "Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound?" "Shall we sin because we are not under law, but under grace?"¹

The apostolic age is admittedly the ideal period of Christian history. The incarnation of God had appeared on earth to free the world from sin, and to bring back the innocence lost by man through the disobedience of Adam. A new life had begun with the appearance of the Christ, and the few years of his ministry among men are considered the golden age of the Church. Jesus had just quitted the scene of his activity, and his first disciples had had the immeasurable advantage of a direct inspiration which immediate contact with him should have given to them. But it is clear that, troubled as was the short public life of Jesus, his teachings did not bring perfection, nor even peace, to those who received his message from his own lips. With the passing away of the apostles and the further spread of the new faith, the moral tone of the Christian community did not improve. That, as a whole, the Christians were superior in this, as in some other respects, to the general pagan population amongst which they lived is very probable, but, all the same, it would be a fallacy to picture the primitive Christians as exempt from the general decadence from which society was then

¹ Gal. v. 13; Rom. vi. 1, 15.

suffering. When Christianity entered all classes, and was professed by a substantial part of the population, any distinctions which formerly marked out the Christian were more or less obliterated. He approached his pagan neighbour to such an extent that the division between them became undistinguishable in ordinary life. This was not the result of social or civic virtues, for, to the true Christian, the Empire, with its power and glory, was an evil which was expected to vanish at the advent of Christ, when the unbelieving would surely be damned for having rejected him as the Saviour. But the assimilation of the Christian grew rapidly, and the Christian community soon adapted itself to the habits and thoughts of the rest of the population. This appears the more certain, as the most, perhaps the only, distinctive mark of the Christian—his religion—became deeply impregnated with pagan ideas and practices.¹

The true picture of the inner life of the early Christians must not be sought in the panegyric literature of the religion any more than in the writings of its contemporary enemies, and least of all, is it to be found in the Christian sectarian controversies, which are full of abuse and malice towards the opponent. Perhaps the best sources can be found in the homiletic and devotional outpourings of the Church Fathers, and, though this kind of literature has inherent failings, the truth is represented there in the largest possible extent. And the picture there unfolded for us is absolutely condemnatory of the superior pretensions of the Church.

¹ Mosheim tells us that already in the fourth century "the religion of Greeks and Romans differed very little in its external appearance from that of the Christians" (*Ecclesiastical History*, Engl. tr., 1838, i. p. 194).

Christianity was, after a few centuries, represented by innumerable sects, combating each other with a bitterness and hatred which excited the surprise and derision of the outside world, and the average Christian was, in spite of his baptism and all the means of grace placed at his disposal, of no appreciably higher moral standing than the average pagan. That the Christian had the ordinary weaknesses of human nature in common with the pagan need cause no surprise or indignation to the outside observer, but it is a convincing refutation of the claims of Christianity when we see the baptized share with the unregenerate the worst vices of a decadent age. No doubt, Christianity produced new types of a higher life, and did much to create amongst its followers a greater sense of responsibility, to abate the excesses of sexual and other popular sins, but the special virtues of the Christians were too often tainted with the prevailing corruption, while new failings made their appearance. It was not only the body of Christians who were strongly infected, but the clergy, who are not only the flower of the Christian communion, but, according to the Christian system, occupy a distinctly privileged spiritual position, were hardly, if at all, better than the general mass of believers. Mosheim, speaking of the ministers of the Gospel in as early as the third century, gives us the following description of them at that time : " Though several yet continued to exhibit to the world illustrious examples of primitive piety and Christian virtue, yet many were sunk in luxury and voluptuousness, puffed up with vanity, arrogance and ambition, possessed with a spirit of contention and discord, and addicted to many other vices that cast an undeserved reproach upon the holy religion of which they were

the unholy professors and ministers. This is testified in such an ample manner by the repeated complaints of many of the most respectable writers of this age, that truth will not permit us to spread the veil which we should otherwise be desirous to cast on such enormities among an order so sacred." ¹ This severe judgment does not exhaust the reluctant censure which the historian has to pass on the leaders of the Church, who, with the growth of its power, lost more and more of the saintliness which they claimed in so large a measure. In the fifth century, we are told that "the vices of the clergy were now carried to the most enormous lengths; and all the writers of this century, whose probity and virtue render them worthy of credit, are unanimous in their accounts of the luxury, arrogance, avarice and voluptuousness of the sacerdotal orders." ² As to the monks, their licentiousness had already then become a proverb. ³ In the sixth century, "the monastic orders in general abounded with fanatics and profligates." ⁴

Such was the moral record of Christianity, from its crystallization into a religion claiming to have brought a new order of things into the world down to the time when Christianity reigned at the seat of the Cæsars, and the cross on which Jesus died became the hope and symbol of victorious warfare. If we want to estimate the extent of the failure of the mission of Jesus Christ, as it is represented in the Christian creed, we need only read the New Testament with the history of Christianity as a commentary. The ideal of Christ's kingdom "not of this world," was as much absent from the minds of the leaders of the Church, as was his unequivocal

¹ Mosheim, *ibid.*, i. p. 132.

² *Ibid.*, i. p. 228.

³ *Ibid.*, i. p. 229.

⁴ *Ibid.*, i. p. 271.

condemnation of the possession of wealth. The whole force of Christendom was bent on the acquisition of power, and the rivalry of its numerous antagonistic sections expended itself, not in works of love, but in an acrimonious dogmatic warfare against one another. Then, as now, the churches were great believers in the virtue of multitudes, and frantic efforts were made for the conversion of the largest numbers. In this lies both the cause and the excuse of the early degeneration of Christianity. That it was not able to arrest the decay of the Roman Empire, which experienced its greatest humiliations when it had already turned Christian, is due to a variety of reasons, but it is not surprising that the new religion should have exercised but little influence on the ethical conduct of the masses, especially of the barbarians who submitted to its sway, when the methods of their conversion are kept in view. Augustine's baptism of 10,000 Angles in Kent, on Christmas of the year 597, does indeed seem a glorious feat, but what effect could, after all, such a wholesale conversion have on the lives of these neophytes? The conversion of the barbarians by order of their own princes, or if forcibly imposed by a foreign conqueror, scarcely possessed any spiritual value as a regenerative power. The fundamental requirement in these cases was a blind submission to the authority of the priest. The entrance into the Christian communion did not necessarily denote a break with the pagan past, either in life or doctrine. "Many of the first Christian missionaries," to quote again the authoritative Christian historian Mosheim, "required nothing of these barbarous people that was difficult to be performed, or laid any remarkable restraint upon their appetites or passions. The principal injunc-

tions they imposed upon their proselytes were that they should get to heart certain summaries of doctrine, and pay the images of Christ and the saints the same religious services which they had formerly offered to the statues of the gods." ¹

The explicit declaration: "Unless ye be born again ye cannot enter the kingdom of heaven," was either overlooked (as it is largely now) in the sense that the man who wants to be "saved" must completely adapt his mode of life to that proclaimed by Jesus, or was interpreted as being complied with by the act of baptism, with its supposed magic effect of instant redemption. Hence baptism in itself was regarded as a sure passport to heaven, even though life was being polluted by all manner of wickedness; or, to give a wider and more unhampered scope to sin and crime and yet to make doubly sure of salvation, it became a common practice to defer the rite until the very last moment, when the probability of death made it dangerous to delay it any longer. That such a doctrine, which could speciously point to the instance of the penitent thief on the cross, should have had a disastrous effect on morality, is evident. We know this, for instance, from the glaring historic example of the first Christian Emperor Constantine, who, in spite of his adoption of Christianity, prudently delayed the act of baptism until his death.²

¹ Mosheim, *ibid.*, i. p. 262.

² That the real spiritual value of such death-bed baptisms was pretty well understood in those days is proved by the following story told by Athanasius: "An angel said to my great predecessor: 'Peter (the bishop of the see), why do you send me these sacks (these wind-bags) carefully sealed up, with nothing whatever inside?'" (Quoted by Dean Stanley, in *History of the Eastern Church*, p. 231.)

The whole extent of the immorality underlying the idea of

“The age was sinking daily from one period of corruption to another,”¹ is the pithy description given of Christian life in the fourth century, and the decline was very rapid. With the irresistible invasion of the tottering Roman Empire by the northern barbarians, and their formal adoption of Christianity; with the growth of the ecclesiastical power as the predominant and decisive force, there began in Europe an epoch of profound moral anarchy, coupled with an undisputed belief in the dogmas of the religion of Christ, and a scrupulous performance of its ritual practices. This eclipse of morals and social progress marks the Christian Ages of Faith, the Dark Ages in the history of European civilization.

It would be a most uncongenial task to pursue at length the various aspects of depravity, social, political and religious, which mark this period of intense ignorance. In the chaos which resulted from the demoralization which had overtaken Christianity, two great events stand out as of far-reaching importance in its history: the conquest of Europe on the one side, and the loss of Asia and Africa on the other. It is most significant that the conversion, whether voluntary or enforced, of the Teutonic and Slavic races took place while they were still in a savage state, and that at the

deferred baptism is fully revealed by the remark of St. Augustine, the great Church Father, who, referring to his own case, exclaims: “Why does it still echo in our ears on all sides: ‘Let him alone, let him do as he will, for he is not yet baptized’?” (*Confessions*, book i. chap. ii.). And yet, speaking of a sin he had committed, he says: “But hast not Thou, O most merciful Lord, pardoned and remitted this sin also, with my other most horrible deadly sins, in the holy water?” (*ibid.*, book ix. chap. ii.).

¹ Mosheim, *ibid.*, i. p. 189.

same time Mohammedanism completely overwhelmed that section of Christendom which had reached the greatest maturity and had produced its ripest and choicest fruits. The accession to Christianity of fresh European blood brought it renewed life and strength, and was the ultimate means of giving an unexpected moral and rational tendency to the development of that religion. But the practical extinction of the Christian Churches in Asia and Africa proved conclusively that the religion of Christ was as much liable to the accidents of decay and death as any human institution, and that the possession of the Christian faith and means of salvation are not prophylactic against ethical corruption and final religious dissolution.

Although this is a fact not open to serious dispute, it is claimed that the Church, as a body, is subject to a special divine guidance which precludes the possibility of its annihilation, or its sinking into error and corruption. How far this immunity extends is a point on which Christian theologians are not at one. The Catholic conception of the Church is based on that of the **כְּנֶסֶת יִשְׂרָאֵל**, the Synagogue of Israel, held among the Jews, but the Christian pretension loses its force by there being too many claimants for the same exclusive honour. The Catholic Churches—Greek and Roman—each believing itself to be the only true exponent of the faith of Christ and of the saints, assert that their respective communions have preserved the truth in its entire purity, and that, notwithstanding any individual failings, the Church of Christ stands unassailable. The Protestant views (divergent on most points) are not so unanimous or clear, but, among the numerous theories, that of Election,

viz., that the true Church consists of members elected for salvation by the grace of God only, is the most distinct. This latter doctrine has in it all the merciless logic characterizing a system which has reduced the hypothetical elect to an infinitesimally small number of the Christian communion, while peopling hell with the vast majority of mankind.

The Christian Church considers itself the heir of the Jewish Synagogue, and of the promises made unto it. With a healthy selfishness, Christendom has only chosen to inherit the blessings to be vouchsafed to Israel, while, with an equally judicious discrimination, it has taken it as a matter of course that the Jews, on account of their wickedness, should alone bear all the curses pronounced against them in case of their disobedience of the commands of the Lord.¹ As a matter of fact, there is no justification whatever for this entirely arbitrary assumption on the part of Christianity.²

It is asserted that Christ came to bring to the world a new Covenant, which should not only differ from the old in princip'e, scope and functions, but would also

¹ True, it is also assumed that the Jews, who are doomed to exist both as an awful example and to prove the truth of Christianity, will one day be saved by adopting that religion, of course in an approved form.

² It appears that the Mohammedans have, in their turn, also appropriated the blessings once belonging to Israel, and so deprived of them the Christians as well as the Jews. As to this, Ockley, in his *History of the Saracens* (Bohn's ed., p. 206) says from his Christian standpoint: "Nor have our own parts of the world been altogether destitute of such able expositors who apply to themselves, without limitation or exception, whatever in Scripture is graciously expressed in favour of the people of God; while whatever is said of the wicked and ungodly and of all the terrors and judgments denounced against them, they bestow with a liberal hand upon their neighbours."

be distinguished by having a complete effect on the heart of man. The new Israel created by the mission of Jesus was to have been more than a continuation of the "ancient" people of God; it was, in a way, to have been its antithesis. It was the imperfection of the one that had to be superseded by the perfection of the other, and the unbelieving and disobedient Jew had to give way in the grace of God to the believing, faithful Christian. The past, as well as the present, shows that the anticipated regeneration has not been attained in the case of the individual Christian, but, as has been said, it is nevertheless still maintained that the Church, whether as a visible or invisible body, is under the special guidance and protection of the Holy Ghost, who has ever kept it, and will always preserve it, from all error. Here we are met by another instance of the singular application of scriptural passages to Christian life and doctrine. As it seems to be considered a sufficient merit in itself to quote exhortations regarding charity and forgiveness ascribed to Jesus, so his predictions are, as a matter of course, considered as already accomplished. The promise that the Spirit of truth shall guide them into all the truth,¹ is assumed by Christians to denote that this has actually taken place. Protestantism, which, by its very name and existence, stands as a witness that, soon after its birth, Christianity lost the guidance of the Spirit of truth, adopted the expedient of elaborating the idea of an invisible Church, while the Catholic Churches claim to have fully experienced this guidance in their respective spheres. But, in addition to these mutually destructive assumptions, the history of Christendom gives ample proof how little

¹ John xvi. 13.

it is justified in its claim as the new and perfect Israel.

How far the ideal and the real Christianity are from each other is best seen in its striving for unity on the one hand and in its dissensions on the other. The exaggerated value that is attached to the mere form of unity within the Church is a measure of the absence of the spirit of true unity. Sectarian quarrels have been a characteristic feature of the religion from its very birth to the present day. Even the apostles themselves were not at one as to their aims and actions, and the recriminations between Paul and Peter, and their respective factions, assumed serious proportions within the nascent creed. In spite of the attempt in the Acts to reconcile the views and methods of the two apostles, it is evident that the conflict between them became at times very pronounced, and the pliable Paul, who, in order to make converts, endeavoured to be "all things to all men,"¹ went so far as to accuse Peter of duplicity. It was not only with the original disciples of Jesus, the so-called Judaizers, that the apostle of the Gentiles and his followers were at variance. The small communities which he formed were often rent with dogmatic disputes which were carried on under various names and auspices.² These splits soon became so general that his Epistles are full of declarations against false teachers and their evil doctrines.

We have thus the striking fact that, from its inception, the religion of Christ, which claimed to be the truth specially revealed to man by an incarnation of the Deity, was turned into a battle-ground of sectarian quarrels and hatreds. It is equally remarkable that

¹ 1 Cor. ix. 22. ² 1 Cor. i. 11, 12.

the dissensions between the first Christians were not concerning the advancement of morals, but were entirely occupied with questions of doctrine and ceremonial observance. With the spread of the new religion, and the continued introduction of philosophizing theories, these dogmatic disputes extended both in scope and intensity. Heresy, that peculiar feature in the history of Christianity, made its appearance at a very early stage, and, within a short period, was represented by innumerable sects.¹ While some of them differed from others in very important essentials, most varied in incredibly trifling and unintelligible points. A large proportion of the primitive Christian sects was built on distinctive notions so flimsy and grotesque that the truths they considered it their special mission to propagate are unknown or incomprehensible to the present age. After the question of the position of the Mosaic ordinances in the Christian dispensation had been settled by the force of numbers, it was the nature of the Godhead which became the central point of dispute. Here speculation and imagination held full sway, and while Gnosticism threatened to turn the Trinitarian Deity into a mere fanciful shadow, the Arian and Catholic sections carried on a ferocious warfare as to the exact quality of the divine substance. There were endless disquisitions as to the nice distinctions to be drawn between the composition and relations of the various persons of the Trinity. It was claimed by the Arians that the Son, who was begotten, was in a certain degree inferior to the Father, who begot him; the Trinitarians, on the other hand, maintained the equality in the nature and substance

¹ During the first three centuries ninety sects are said to have made their appearance.

of Father and Son. To make the controversy still more involved, both sides were constantly in danger of falling into the various subsidiary heresies which divided the Church on the subject ; these disputes became so violent and confused that they were turned into a theme for mirth among the heathen.¹

On taking Christianity under his protection, the Emperor Constantine endeavoured to put an end to the disorder which reigned among the Christians, and to settle the central doctrine, which had assumed the form of a veritable chaos. He, therefore, convoked the Council of Nice, and there it was that, by the authority of this pagan ruler, and not by the free influence of the Holy Spirit, the precise nature and essence of the Christian Deity was fixed. Arius was condemned, and his followers anathematized. By direction of the Emperor, all the writings of Arius were to be burned, and those who retained them were to be punished with death. The Nicene doctrine of the Trinity was not accepted by Christendom at large. The fierceness with which the quarrel was continued, the calumnies, intrigues and base means with which it was endeavoured to crush the opponent are hardly to be matched in secular warfare. The efforts that were made to bring about a settlement or a reconciliation culminated in Councils, which were supposed to represent the authority of the universal Church. The second Council of Ephesus, convened for such a purpose in 449, was disgraced by

¹ Referring to the great controversy respecting the relations of the Son to the Father, the historian Socrates says : " It was like a battle fought in the dark ; for neither party seemed at all to understand on what ground they vilified each other " (i. chap. 23).

so much violence that it became known as the Council of Robbers,¹ and then there took place in 451 the Council of Chalcedon, which, on the one hand, nullified the decisions of the Council of Ephesus and, on the other, confirmed doctrines enunciated at previous other Councils. It was there recognized that in elaborating in precise terms the idea of the incarnation of God, there was to be either a difference between the three Persons of the Deity, or that, if they are the same in every respect, there can be no distinction between them. A commission appointed by the Council thereupon formulated the following belief concerning Jesus Christ :—

“ Following in the footsteps of the holy Fathers, we declare with one voice, that we ought to confess one sole and the same Jesus Christ, who is perfect in deity, and perfect in humanity, truly God, and truly man, composed of a reasonable soul, and of a body, consubstantial with the Father as to the deity, and consubstantial with us as to the humanity, and in everything resembling us except sin ; begotten of the Father before the ages according to the deity, and in later times, born of the Virgin Mary, Mother of God, according to the humanity, for us and for our salvation ; one sole and the same Jesus Christ, unique son, Lord in two natures, without confusion, without change, without division, without separation, without the union removing the difference of the natures ; on the contrary, the idioms of each are preserved and concur in one sole person, and one sole hypostasis ; in such a way that he is not divided or separated into two persons, but is one sole and the same unique son, God Word, our Lord Jesus

¹ The Bishop of Constantinople was trampled to death by the Bishop of Alexandria.

Christ. The Council forbids each and all to think or to teach differently, under pain to bishops and clerks of being deposed, to monks and to laics of being anathematized."

This authoritative resolution was, however, as little successful in bringing peace to the Christian camp as were former decisions on the subject. The various parties and heresies triumphed alternately by the favour of princes, whose touchstone of Christian truth seemed to be their own caprice. Thus we find that Constantine, who had proceeded so severely against Arius, afterwards recalled him, and was himself baptized on his deathbed by an Arian bishop. While Constantius, the son of Constantine, supported the Arians, it was another Emperor, Theodosius, who earned the gratitude of the Catholic Church by his ruthless suppression of the Arians. Their peculiar doctrine was, nevertheless, adopted by the barbarians outside the Empire, and there the creed maintained itself until the force of political and ecclesiastical events brought about the downfall of Arianism also among those peoples. Semi-Unitarian conceptions of the Christian triune Divinity arose afterwards now and again in the Christian Church, and many other ideas on the subject asserted themselves, but the Trinitarian view evolved at Nice and other Councils ultimately triumphed, and was embodied in the so-called Athanasian Creed, which is read in the Christian public worship, and runs as follows:—

Whosoever will be saved, before all things it is necessary that he hold the Catholic Faith.

Which Faith except every one do keep whole and undefiled, without doubt he shall perish everlastingly.

And the Catholic Faith is this: That we worship one God in Trinity, and Trinity in Unity;

Neither confounding the Persons nor dividing the Substance.

For there is one Person of the Father, another of the Son, and another of the Holy Ghost.

But the Godhead of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, is all one, the Glory equal, the Majesty co-eternal.

Such as the Father is, such is the Son, and such is the Holy Ghost.

The Father uncreate, the Son uncreate, and the Holy Ghost uncreate.

The Father incomprehensible, the Son incomprehensible, and the Holy Ghost incomprehensible.

The Father eternal, the Son eternal, and the Holy Ghost eternal.

And yet they are not three eternals, but one eternal.

As also there are not three incomprehensibles, nor three uncreated : but one uncreated, and one incomprehensible.

So likewise the Father is Almighty, the Son Almighty, and the Holy Ghost Almighty.

And yet they are not three Almightyies, but one Almighty.

So the Father is God, the Son is God, and the Holy Ghost is God.

And yet they are not three Gods, but one God.

So likewise the Father is Lord, the Son Lord, and the Holy Ghost Lord.

And yet not three Lords, but one Lord.

For like as we are compelled by the Christian verity to acknowledge every Person by himself to be God and Lord ;

So are we forbidden by the Catholic Religion to say, There be three Gods, or three Lords.

The Father is made of none : neither created, nor begotten.

The Son is of the Father alone : not made, nor created, but begotten.

The Holy Ghost is of the Father and of the Son : neither made, nor created, nor begotten, but proceeding.

So there is one Father, not three Fathers ; one Son, not three Sons ; one Holy Ghost, not three Holy Ghosts.

And in this Trinity none is afore, or after other ; none is greater, or less than another ;

But the whole three Persons are co-eternal together, and co-equal.

So that in all things, as is aforesaid, the Unity in Trinity, and the Trinity in Unity is to be worshipped.

He therefore that will be saved must thus think of the Trinity.

Furthermore, it is necessary to everlasting salvation that he also believe rightly the Incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ.

For the right Faith is, that we believe and confess that our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is God and Man ;

God, of the Substance of the Father, begotten before the worlds : and Man, of the Substance of his Mother, born in the world ;

Perfect God, and perfect Man, of a reasonable soul and human flesh subsisting ;

Equal to the Father, as touching His Godhead, and inferior to the Father, as touching His Manhood.

Who although He be God and Man, yet He is not two, but one Christ ;

One ; not by conversion of the Godhead into flesh, but by taking of the Manhood into God ;

One altogether ; not by confusion of Substance, but by unity of Person.

For as the reasonable soul and flesh is one man, so God and Man is one Christ ;

Who suffered for our salvation, descended into hell, rose again the third day from the dead.

He ascended into heaven, He sitteth on the right hand of the Father, God Almighty : from whence He shall come to judge the quick and the dead.

At whose coming all men shall rise again with their bodies, and shall give account for their own works.

And they that have done good shall go into life everlasting, and they that have done evil into everlasting fire.

This is the Catholic Faith, which except a man believe faithfully, he cannot be saved.

This most remarkable statement is the last word of Orthodox Christianity on the Deity. In comparing the Old Covenant with the New, it is impossible to avoid being struck above all by the extraordinary contrast which is afforded by the conception of God in Judaism on the one, and in Christianity on the other, hand. In Judaism, the basis of the religion is the purest form of Monotheism, where the only doctrines concerning it are affirmations of the transcendent, ethical, and beneficent character of the Divinity. In spite of the philosophical

interpretations and theories of the Hellenistic and medieval Jewish thinkers, this purity has remained unimpaired. Even at the most decadent period of Judaism, when, forced back by a hostile world, the Jewish mind took refuge in the mysticism of the Cabbala, speculation on the Divine essence produced no abiding result.

Entirely different has been the effect of the views on the Deity held in Christendom. The strongly anthropomorphic conception of God prevailing in the Church has made it possible for God the Father to be a popular subject for pictorial representation among Greek and Roman Catholics, and in the Middle Ages He was even made to appear on the stage. From the earliest times the nice adjustment of the various positions assigned to the three Persons in the Christian Godhead proved a fruitful cause of strife. "Disputes on the nature of Christ," says Dean Milman, "were indeed coeval with the promulgation of Christianity."¹ The profound significance and consequences of this fact can only be properly estimated if it is realized that the personality of Christ is the centre of Christian life and faith. By making him the cause of division and hatred, not merely between Christendom and the rest of mankind, but between Christian and Christian, the streams of Christian life and faith were poisoned at their sources.

Besides this main theme for Christian dissension, many points of dogma and ceremonial gave rise to strife and schism. The doctrine of the Procession of the Holy Spirit—whether the Third Person of the Trinity proceeded from the Father only or passed also through the Son—was for centuries a subject of acrimonious

¹ *History of Christianity*, ii. p. 355.

dispute, and led to the ultimate separation between the Eastern and the Western Churches. The time at which Easter is to be kept, the use of leavened or unleavened bread, and similar contentions, were considered of equally fundamental importance by Rome and Constantinople.

Almost as prolific as the divisions of early Christianity were the sects that were born of the Reformation in the sixteenth century, and which are computed to have amounted to something like the imposing number of eighty. The Lutheran and Reformed Churches in Germany were divided from each other, as they were both from Roman Catholicism, because they could not agree on the exact definition of the nature of the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper. The much-belauded heroism of the Scottish Covenanters was largely expended in the rejection of a certain form of Church Government, which their opponents tried to force upon them with a cruel fanaticism. The leaders of the Reformation had each their favourite dogma, which was propagated by them with great ardour, and was opposed by others with equal vehemence. The Greek and Oriental Churches are even more earnest in upholding their dogmatical and ceremonial distinctions than the Roman Catholics and Protestants. The spirituality of those communions, which share in common the Christian pride of being free from the yoke of the Jewish Law, can be gauged by the reforms which were introduced by Nikon in the Russian Church amidst the determined opposition of the believers—an opposition which, in spite of persistent persecution, is continued to the present day. The reforms of that ecclesiastic concerned such questions as benedictions with three fingers instead

of two, a white altar cloth instead of an embroidered one, pictures kissed only twice a year, the cross signed the wrong way, wrong inflections in pronouncing the creed, the number of transverse beams of the cross, the repetition of the name of Jesus in two syllables instead of three, the repetition of the Hallelujah twice instead of once, the direction of processions from right to left or from left to right.¹ All these points were considered as matters of spiritual life and death, and this, the only "reformation" of Russian Christianity, has in the course of time produced more martyrs than the early Church.

Such a pronounced ritualism, as is thus manifested in Greek Catholicism, is by no means abnormal in historical Christianity. The Apostolic Church either admitted the validity of the Jewish ordinances or had to create its own. This activity seems to have been carried on most energetically, to judge by the rapid growth of Christian ceremonial. The religion formulated by Paul, which had considered the Torah of Moses as the greatest offence of Judaism, gradually adopted in its turn a considerable portion of Jewish ceremonialism, and all the paraphernalia of pagan worship. At the end of a few centuries, the ceremonial of the Christians was hardly distinguishable in external appearance from that prevailing among the Greeks and Romans.² It is rather instructive to note the tone of growing impatience with which the Protestant Church historian Mosheim traces the degeneration of the Church in that direction, until, writing of the fifth century, he tells us that to "enumerate the rites and institutions that

¹ Dean Stanley, *Eastern Church*, pp. 344, 383, 384.

² Cf. *supra*, p. 154, note 1.

were added in this century to the Christian worship would require a volume of considerable size.”¹ Even the pagan festivals were turned Christian; the saints took the places vacated by the idols, and the Virgin Mary was accorded the attributes and veneration assigned to a goddess.

The assumed contrast between Jewish and Christian ritualism is the result of the delusive comparison that is generally instituted between Christian theory and non-Christian practice. Thus the Talmud is made to serve as a glaring example of dead ceremonialism against the living spirituality of the New Testament. The comparison between the two is unwarranted. The sole purpose of the Gospels and Epistles is to glorify the life of Jesus and the work of his apostles, while the Talmud contains not only the post-biblical literature of the Jewish religion for a period extending over 500 years, but also the civil and criminal code of Jewish secular government. A compilation like the Talmud—which stands unique by itself—can perhaps be compared to the somewhat analogous literature of medieval Christianity. It will then be found that both err in an equal degree in the minute attention which they pay to the contingencies of the ecclesiastical polity, and in the excessive importance which they attach to it. Both the Jewish Rabbi and the Catholic theologian treat ceremonial questions with the same earnestness and interest. Numerous volumes were written during the Middle Ages on the conduct which a Christian ought to adopt in every sphere and act of life. The priestly and monastic life has, in addition, a very extensive literature of its own. Questions relating to the tonsure,

¹ *Eccles. Hist.*, i, p, 240.

the cowl, and other pieces of dress have given rise to some of the fiercest debates and dissensions which have agitated monachism, and the rules governing the conduct of monks are frequently ludicrous in their minuteness. Sacraments, which, as means of salvation, are naturally of the greatest importance, have also received very much attention from their material aspect.¹ In regard to the fast to be observed before taking the Sacrament, the Roman Catholic casuists have carefully drawn up a list of substances according as they are digestible or otherwise (because indigestible substances, taken in small quantities, do not break the natural fast) ; hence the communicant is informed that glass, sawdust, silk, metal, etc., do not break the fast, but chalk, linen, butter, etc., do. A fly taken deliberately would exclude from communion ; a fly taken involuntarily, in the course of its volitation, would not exclude. A quarter of a teaspoonful of water taken deliberately, or a few drops of blood from gums, would break the fast ; swallowed involuntarily in washing the teeth, there must be at least half a teaspoonful to exclude from communion.² There was even a dispute, and a concomitant heresy, on the question whether the Eucharist passed through the usual course of digestion.

So essential indeed is the ceremonial part in the Christian religion that no sect admitting the validity of the historic tradition and development of the Church can repudiate, or dispense with, those ritual regulations

¹ The case of the " water " of baptism, tea, beer, broth, soap-suds, puddle, etc., have been fought over by rival theologians as valid or invalid matter of the Sacrament. Soup, chocolate and milk are forbidden ; beer, tea, coffee, etc., are permitted (Joseph McCabe, *Life in a Modern Monastery*, p. 82).

² McCabe, *ibid.*, pp. 80, 81.

and ordinances which have been elaborated by the highest and most revered authorities of the faith, and hallowed by the practice of ages. But in addition to this ritualism, which, in spite of the Pauline charge against Judaism, is considered as legitimate in Christianity, the Church contains an important materialistic element from which the Synagogue is entirely free. The idea of the incarnation of God in the form of a human being, who was born, lived and died as a man among men, has afforded full opportunity for the introduction of an earthly embodiment of the Divinity. The declaration of Jesus to the woman of Samaria that the day was coming when neither Jerusalem nor Mount Gerizim would be considered holy places, but that the Father would be worshipped in spirit and in truth, had little point then, when in many synagogues over a large part of the world God was already worshipped in spirit and in truth, but if the prediction referred to a time when there would be no special holy places, the prophecy has not been fulfilled in the case of Christianity. Where Judaism had only one Temple as the central sanctuary and place of pilgrimage, the life of Jesus has created for Christendom many holy places in the land where he lived. From his birth to his burial, every supposed trace of his career is marked by sanctuaries. In this connexion, even the river Jordan is a sacred Christian stream, whose waters are credited with certain mystic virtues.

It is not only in Palestine that Christianity has its holy places. Catholicism, Oriental and Occidental, has established them in such a profusion that they recall the paganism which it supplanted. This is the result of the creation of the host of saints which is so remarkable

a feature of Catholic devotions. The images of the Madonna with her child are an ordinary object of Catholic adoration, and, dressed up in tawdry fineries, they are set up for the edification of the faithful in the high-ways and byways of Romanist countries. Her fame is not less in the Greek and Oriental Churches, and many are the rival shrines dedicated to her. Like the cry of old : "Great is the Diana of Ephesus," we now hear in one part of Europe the watchword : "Great is our Lady of Lourdes," and there comes from the other end of the continent the answer : "Great is the Mother of God of Kazan." In addition to the "Mother of God,"¹ there is a vast body of saints, who have provided innumerable centres of concourse to the faithful. To all intents and purposes, these saints are distinct deities, inferior indeed to the Supreme God, but popular to an extreme, with a cult of their own. The churches are filled with altars dedicated to the saints, and Greek Catholicism, especially its important Russian section, has turned the religion of the masses into a crude iconolatry.²

Closely connected with the cult of saints is that of their relics. One is the corollary of the other, and both assumed great importance at an early period of Christianity. To meet an unhealthy craving for material

¹ It was no doubt the popular appellation, "Mother of God," which must have suggested to Jerome, the Church Father, to apply to Paula, a rich Roman lady who had consecrated the virginity of her daughter, the title of "Mother-in-law of God" (Gibbon, *Roman Empire*, iv. p. 115).

² Dean Stanley says : "No veneration of relics or images in the West can convey any adequate notion of the veneration for pictures in Russia. It is the main support and stay of the religious faith and practice" (*Eastern Church*, p. 293).

objects of worship,¹ there grew up everywhere a most extraordinary supply of all kinds of relics. Those assigned to Jesus were, of course, considered of the greatest sanctity, and the Empress Helena, Constantine's mother, who set out for Palestine in search of them, seems to have found everything she was looking for. In discovering the unknown place of burial of Jesus, there were, strangely enough, also found three crosses on which he and the two thieves were crucified, together with the inscription that had been over the cross of Jesus. As it was not known, however, which of the crosses was the one on which Christ had suffered, the difficulty was settled by a miracle. This cross, and the nails attached thereto, have since been regarded as some of the most treasured spiritual possessions of Christendom.² Exceptionally favoured is still considered the sanctuary which possesses a piece of wood, or a nail, of the cross, and these are used on special occasions for the edification of the faithful.³ Of superlative

¹ The extent of this demand may be gauged by St. Augustine's statement that pilgrimages were made to Arabia to visit the dunghill on which Job is supposed to have sat.

² "The precious treasure was divided, part enshrined in a silver case remained at Jerusalem, from whence pilgrims constantly bore fragments of the still vegetating wood to the West, till enough was accumulated in the different churches to build a ship of war. Part was sent to Constantinople; the nails of the passion of Christ were turned into a bit for the warhorse of the Emperor, or, according to another account, represented the rays of the sun around the head of his statue" (Dean Milman, *History of Christianity*, vol. ii. p. 348).

³ Never have I been so struck by the radical difference between Judaism and Christianity, as when I successively visited in Paris the ancient cathedral of Notre Dame and the synagogue in the rue de la Victoire.

In the synagogue the joyful character of the service was dignified by a beautiful simplicity and embellished by one of

sanctity and fruitfulness were also other relics connected with Jesus. There are many lances that lay claim to have pierced his side, and numerous crowns of thorns.¹ What can there be more characteristic of the materialization of the Christian faith than the present of the baby-linen of the Son of God which was made by Baldwin II, Emperor of Constantinople, to Louis IX, King of France?² Unblushing cupidity on the one hand, and an abject credulity on the other, seem to have proved a favourable soil for relic-mongery, and it is, therefore, by no means surprising that during the Crusades the Templar Knights carried on a profitable trade by selling to the Christian armies bottles of milk of the Virgin Mary, or that a monastery in Jerusalem even claimed to possess one of the fingers of the Holy Ghost.³

Two incidents which happened in Spain give a true indication of the distinction which divides Judaism from Christianity in their attitude towards the material-

those discourses, the charity and light of which are manifested in the published addresses of the late Grand Rabbin Zadoc Kahn. In the cathedral, amidst the solemn gloom characteristic of Catholic churches, and intended to create a mystic and mysterious effect, there was a congregation pressing into an enclosure, where, behind rails, priests were offering to the devout to kiss on their knees two little cases containing a nail and some wood of the Cross. With all deference and reverence, I wondered how this could possibly be reconciled with the worship of God in spirit and in truth.

¹ In the Middle Ages there was to be found in Rome almost every object mentioned in the Gospels that Jesus or his mother had either worn or touched—vessels, utensils, stones, garments, and even, in contradiction to dogma, portions of his body (Döllinger, *Studies in European History*, p. 69).

² Gibbon, *Roman Empire*, vii. p. 30.

³ J. W. Draper, *The Conflict between Religion and Science*, p. 270.

istic aspects of religion. When, at the end of the fifteenth century, hundreds of thousands of Spanish Jews preferred exile to baptism, the most cherished possessions that accompanied them in their wanderings were their sacred books and literary treasures, but when the Spanish Christians had to seek in the north of the peninsula a refuge from the Mohammedan onslaught the highest and holiest that they took with them was a chest filled with relics of their saints.¹

It would be unfair to charge historic Christianity with every one of its excrescences. The truth is the same, and yet it presents itself so differently to the philosopher and the peasant. Thus the gross idolatry on which Catholicism thrives in South America does not represent a criterion of the purity of that faith, and Christendom cannot be held responsible for the putridity of the Church in Abyssinia. In Judaism, where an effective barrier seems to have been erected against saint worship, so that it is specifically stated in the Pentateuch that the place of the grave of Moses is not known "unto this day," the invocation of **זכות אבות**—ancestral merit—has not only found its way into the liturgy, but, in certain Oriental parts, visits to the grave of some famous Rabbi are resorted to periodically, or in cases of distress. There, however, the matter rests. There is no question of adoration, certainly not the slightest tinge of image and relic worship. In Catholic Christianity, on the other hand, not only are images and relics part of the approved ritual, but even in the most authoritative and enlightened quarters there is no condemnation of the extraordinary veneration that is paid to the bones, hair, pieces of clothing,

¹ Buckle, *History of Civilization*, ii. p. 441.

etc., which are reputed to have belonged to some holy person. Nor is the Church slow to utilize for its purposes this belief in the spiritual value which is supposed to be inherent in some inanimate things. At the end of the nineteenth century, and in the very centre of European civilization, the Roman Catholic Church offered at Treves for the adoration of the faithful a "holy" coat said to have been worn by Jesus.

An examination and survey of the doctrines, practices and history of Christianity show that it has been built up and maintained as a compromise between Judaism and paganism. The basis of the Church is strongest where it was formed by the Monotheism and ethics of Judaism, while the superstructure consists largely of the mythology and ritualism of the heathen. In so far as it has remained on its Jewish foundation, Christianity has succeeded in preserving its pure and lofty character, while every extension of the heathen elements has served to further the corruption of the Church. Such, however, is the nature of Christianity that, while Israel has breathed into it a soul, it was the corruptible body it obtained from paganism which has ensured its material existence.¹ Of course, this does not constitute an advance on Judaism. Neither in the domain of faith nor of morals does the superiority of Christianity become apparent thereby, and in both it has always fallen very far short of the ideal set up by the Jewish prophets and sages.

Judaism is condemned, according to denunciation by Jesus (no indulgent critic of his opponents) of the ethical state of its adherents in Jerusalem at that period, a time of exceptional trouble. This judgment on

¹ Cf. Hallam, *Europe in the Middle Ages*, iii. p. 291:

Judaism is held to constitute the necessity for its abrogation in favour of Christianity.

A few hundred years after Jesus we find Jerusalem under full Christian sway. The Holy City had become entirely Christian, and there were no outside influences to oppose the complete application of Christ's rule of life in the place where the most dramatic events of his activity were enacted. The religion which gloried in his name was still in a stage of primitive purity. Yet so great was the prevalence of sin in the Christian Jerusalem that in the fourth century the Church Father Gregory of Nyssa, who had been on a pilgrimage there, had to warn others against following his example of Christian piety. The immorality of the Christian inhabitants of the Holy City had, according to him, reached such a degree that "there is no form of uncleanness that is not perpetrated amongst them; rascality, adultery, theft, idolatry, poisoning, quarrelling, murder are rife; and the last kind of evil is so excessively prevalent that nowhere in the world are people so ready to kill each other as there, where kinsmen attack each other like wild beasts and spill each others' blood, merely for the sake of lifeless plunder."¹

One of the most prominent arguments for the supersession of the Old Covenant by a new one, is the Pauline theory of the freedom of the faith of Christ from the shackles of Jewish ceremonialism. Yet, while maintaining this reason as a standing indictment against Judaism, Christian ritualism developed rapidly to such an extent that St. Augustine already complained that the yoke under which, according to him, the Jews had formerly been weighed down, was more

¹ In his letter on "Pilgrimages."

tolerable than that imposed upon many Christians in his day.¹

These facts of transcendent importance are, however, completely overlooked in a Christian consideration of the claims of Christianity against Judaism. It is not remembered in this connexion that fifteen centuries after the birth of Christ there took place a revolution within Christianity because the moral sense of a large part of Christendom was shaken to its depths by the utter corruption of the religion in its doctrines and practices, and by the gross depravity of its teachers. It is not considered that, while boasting about the freedom from the yoke of the Law, Christianity raised ceremonialism to a position of such importance that at one time ferocious persecutions were instituted against those who had been guilty of eating meat on Fridays, the culprits being burnt alive, hung or submitted to various other barbarous punishments.² And, it may be noted, laxity of morals and strict attention to ceremonialism were often closely connected. Erasmus complained that if a priest has his hair grown or wears a lay habit, he is punished, but if he debauches himself and others he is still a pillar of the Church.³

The Jews have been justly castigated for their sins by their own prophets and leaders, and one of the most remarkable facts is the care with which these denunciations have been zealously collected and treasured by

¹ Cf. Mosheim, *Ecclesiastical History*, i. p. 194.

² Lecky, *Rationalism*, i. p. 312. An edict of Charlemagne, and also a law of the Saxons, condemned to death any one who ate meat in Lent, unless the priest was satisfied that it was a matter of absolute necessity (Lecky, *European Morals*, ii. p. 243).

³ Quoted by Fairbairn, *The Place of Christ in Modern Theology*, p. 136.

the very people against whom they have been directed. The failings laid to the charge of the Jews are not disowned by them, but fully recognized in all their bearings and consequences. "We are not so shameless of face or stiff-necked as to declare in Thy presence, O Lord, our God, and God of our fathers, that we are righteous and have not sinned; verily we have sinned, we and our fathers."¹ It has, on the other hand, to be remembered that, since the time of Antiochus Epiphanes, Judaism has lived more or less under the depressing influences of religious persecution, and has always been surrounded by hostile forces. In spite of these evident disadvantages, the Jews have, during these two thousand years, maintained their religious ideal with at least as much of that unflinching faith and courage which have raised the early Christian martyrs so high in the estimation of subsequent Christian generations. As to the purity and simplicity of the Jewish creed, it is still an unattained, if unconscious, object of desire of the most enlightened Christians of the present time. In the sphere of morals, it must be accounted a matter of the greatest significance that *reforms in Judaism have never been called forth by the corruption of its teachers*. In Christianity, however, it was the morals of the priesthood, from the Holy Father in Rome downwards, which produced the Reformation in the sixteenth century. For instance, the existence of *mulieres subintroductæ*, the system by which Christian pastors kept secret wives, and yet claimed the presumed sanctity of celibacy, is an impossibility in Judaism, owing to its healthy view of the matrimonial state, whereas such

¹ In the Amidah for the Day of Atonement.

a practice must necessarily have vitiated the whole atmosphere of the Christian clergy.¹

It cannot be too often insisted upon that if Christianity has not only not exceeded, but has not even realized the Jewish conception of the higher life, then the claim of superiority assumed by Christianity over Judaism is entirely unjustified. Whatever Christianity may have given to others, and with all the unstinted admiration and high respect we ought justly to entertain for the ethics of Christ, it is to the Jews that it owes its existence and moral force, and it can give them nothing of value which they do not already possess themselves.

But this is not all. If Judaism failed in its mission, and was therefore cast off, then, according to the Christian theory, the failure of Christianity is still more evident, and a still heavier punishment ought to have been meted out to it. "For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required,"² and if Christendom measured its failings by the standard of its theoretical claims, we should hear less about the sins of Israel of old. The Old Covenant, we are told, was imperfect, and so was its people; then Christ, the incarnation of God, came into the world to proclaim the perfect New Covenant. To his disciples he said: "Ye are the salt of the earth," and up till now they readily claim this position; yet they have never contemplated the contingency and the ensuing result foreshadowed by Jesus in the conclusion of his statement: "but if the salt have lost its savour, wherewith shall it

¹ According to Dean Milman, the system of *mulieres sub-introductæ* seems to have been almost general from the middle of the third century (*History of Christianity*, iii. p. 282).

² Luke xii. 48.

be salted ? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out and to be trodden under foot of men.”¹ And in unfolding the New Covenant in opposition to the Old, Jesus addressed to his followers this solemn admonition : “ I say unto you, that except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of heaven.”² We are then told that, to crown his appointed task, Jesus died to save the world from error, sin and eternal damnation. How far his disciples are saved from eternal damnation in another world, we know not ; but we know that those believing in Jesus and calling upon his name are not exempt from error, sin and evil in this world. What then are we to think of the prospects of the kingdom of Christ on earth and of its glories in heaven, if, according to the infallible witness of history, the righteousness of the sons of his kingdom has not exceeded, nay, has even fallen short of, the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees ?

¹ Matt. v. 13.

² Matt. v. 20.

CHAPTER VIII

MESSIANIC PROPHECIES

“Now all this is come to pass that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet.”—*The Gospel according to St. Matthew.*

THE Jewish Sacred Scriptures constitute the common meeting ground of Judaism and Christianity. Before the compilation of the Gospels and Epistles, and their circulation among the believers, the Old Testament was to the primitive Christians the only revealed Word of God and authoritative basis for the faith of the Church. The New Testament and other writings were then gradually added, as records of the life and work of Jesus and of his disciples. The New Testament did not, however, oppose the Old, but served as its amplification, as the Gospel of Christ was considered to be the consummation of the Law of Moses. The figures and incidents of the history of the Jews retained their sacred character, and the promises of Hebrew prophets were devoutly searched for the necessary justification of Christianity, which, it was felt, they alone could provide. Hence the elaborate attempt of the early Christian writers to adduce from Jewish sources the proofs of Christ's mission and of the truth of the various events attending his life. It was in the interpre-

tation of certain biblical passages that there arose fundamental differences between the Jews and the Christians. The Christian views were incorporated in the New Testament, and so obtained a fixed and sacred character, which, as a whole, they have retained to this day. The passages from the Old Testament cited by Matthew or Paul to illustrate or enforce their statements and arguments, are still utilized by the Christian for the same purpose. For, being founded on the inspired writings of the apostles, these Christological passages of the Old Testament thereby become an indissoluble part of their teachings, and so clothed with an authority which neither tradition nor commentators could equal.

The hermeneutics of the Sacred Scriptures in vogue among the Jews of the time had its influence on the early Christians. Among the former, the application of biblical passages to all sorts of ideas and circumstances was carried out with the greatest freedom of selection. The irrelevancy of such quotations was not considered as of any consequence to the theme in question. This mode of interpretation and quotation was, however, generally confined to the aggadic (homiletic) part of the study of the Scriptures, and this method has always been in vogue among preachers, whether ancient or modern. How far such a system is to be condemned, is a point that need not be touched upon here, since homilies have in their very nature a roving tendency, the evil of which is generally not over-serious. But if such a use of Scripture is applied to the formation of some dogma or ritual practice, then there arises a perversion with incalculable results to the future of religious development.

The history of the origins of Christian sects is largely occupied with the misinterpretation of biblical texts.

The tremendous edifice of the Papacy hangs on the view taken of the declaration: "Thou art Peter, and upon this rock will I build my Church." If the Romanist contention be right, what a terrible responsibility rests on the Christian world repudiating the supremacy of the Pope; but if wrong, what an abyss of self-deception is there opened before our eyes! Yet the whole turns on the exegesis of one single passage. Now, these texts on which depend such great issues are by no means clear. They are oracles foretelling the future, frequently in shadowy, mysterious terms. The wealth of Oriental imagery has given to the whole a dazzling glamour, through which we are not always able to discern the true character of the future portrayed for us. Under such circumstances, the imagination is left the widest scope, and ignorance still adds to the bewilderment engendered thereby.

The mode of life prevailing among the primitive Christians was very conducive to such a result. The humble station and want of learning which characterized them may be taken as a boast or as a reproach, according to taste, but, with very few exceptions, such was their condition. Galilee, whence they hailed at first, was noted for the want of Jewish culture among its inhabitants, who, in a country aptly termed גליל הגוים, the district of the Gentiles, were in a "dim twilight of Judaism and heathenism."¹ The people, aroused to a high pitch of religious excitement by the troublous times and Messianic hopes, were eagerly ready to welcome the expected deliverer and to justify by the Sacred Scriptures any of his actions or the views they may have formed of him. The system of types and alle-

¹ Stanley, *Jewish Church*, ii. p. 468.

gories, by which the persons and incidents of olden times were supposed to foreshadow similar figures and events of the future, was fruitful of the most varied combinations and fancies. It should also be remembered that not only the Christians, but also the Jews, have been very fond, whether as a consolation in time of distress or as a theological subtlety, of tracing references to the Messiah in every conceivable manner. For instance, the declaration in the blessing of Jacob: "The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, till he come to Shiloh" (or, "until Shiloh come," as others translate it), "and unto it (or, 'him') shall the gathering of the peoples be,"¹ has been given a Messianic turn. "Shiloh" was supposed to represent a name for the Messiah, and Christians argued therefrom that whereas Judah, or the Jews, were to retain their own government until the coming of Jesus, the sceptre was to depart from them after this. Modern critics, however, assume that "Shiloh" in this obscure passage refers to the famous place of pilgrimage of that name, and that what is meant in the blessing is that as long as the Israelites should come to Shiloh, the supremacy would be retained by the tribe of Judah, the leading tribe of Israel. In any case, the Christian view does not hold good, for the sceptre departed from Judah long before the advent of Jesus. Already at the Babylonian captivity, the whole of Judah, with their king Zedekiah, were led into exile. During the period of the second Temple no members of the house of David sat on the throne, and at the time of Jesus the Jews could say: "We have no king but Cæsar."² Of course, after the Babylonian captivity the

¹ Gen. xlix. 10.

² John xix. 15.

tribe of Judah again obtained the supremacy in Israel, and became the ground stock of the Jewish people.

The rationalist interpretation of the text of Holy Writ, commenced by the medieval Jewish exegetists and brought to a high state of scientific development by modern Protestant theologians, could have found no place in the process which formed Christianity out of the Bible. Dean Stanley says: "The allegorical interpretations (of Scripture) given by the early Fathers are virtual confessions that they have not attempted to expound the original meaning of the sacred authors,"¹ and this holds equally true of those who fashioned Christianity before the existence of the Fathers. Indeed, whenever any part of Christendom commenced to search the Scriptures, not merely for the support of favourite doctrines, but as to the real meaning of the Word of God, then, as in the case of Protestantism, the ultimate result was the formation of some heresy. It is, therefore, not surprising that in the Catholic Church the plain meaning of the biblical text has never been in favour, and any serious attempt to obtain it has always been looked upon with a well-founded suspicion and dread. This is clearly brought out by Cardinal Newman, who says: "The immediate source of that fertility in heresy, which is the unhappiness of the ancient Syrian Church, was its celebrated Exegetical School. The history of that school is summed up in the broad characteristic fact, on the one hand that it devoted itself to the literal and critical interpretation of Scripture, and on the other that it gave rise first to the Arian and then to the Nestorian heresy."² Then

¹ *History of the Eastern Church*, Introd., p. 71.

² *The Development of Christian Doctrine*, p. 285.

the Cardinal, referring to Theodore of Mopsuestia, the great leader of Nestorianism, makes the following significant admission as to the danger and consequences of the critical method of biblical exegesis: "Theodore was bent on ascertaining the literal sense, an object with which no fault could be found: but, leading him, of course, to the Hebrew text instead of the Septuagint, it also led him to Jewish commentators. Jewish commentators naturally suggested events and objects short of evangelical as the fulfilment of the prophetic announcements, and, when it was possible, an ethical sense instead of a prophetic."¹

This train of thought, and the objections raised here against the Jewish influence on the Nestorian Church, are highly interesting and instructive. Especially strange seems at first the somewhat depreciatory reference to Theodore's unconventional study of the original text of the Hebrew Bible, instead of having utilized, as usual, the corrupt Septuagint translation. But this aversion to the original texts, whether of the Old or the New Testament, was a well-established feature of Christianity, and was only broken at the Reformation. The primitive Church relied on the Greek Septuagint version of the Hebrew Scriptures, and any errors that had crept in owing to the ignorance of the translators have, by a citation of any such passage by a New Testament writer, been stamped as authoritative. It is not sufficient to point to the Hebrew original and show, for instance, that "A virgin shall conceive and bear a son"² is not a true rendering; the fact that the unknown Septuagint translator had mistakenly turned עלמה (a maiden or young woman) into "virgin,"

¹ *The Development of Christian Doctrine*, p. 288. ² Isa. vii. 14.

and so perpetrated a monstrous blunder, is not considered; the fact that this declaration of the prophet is taken by the apostle as a proof of the virgin-birth of Jesus is sufficient for the Christian world. True, in 1884 a number of leading English divines authoritatively entered in the margin of the Revised Version of the Bible the following variation: "The maiden is with child and beareth," but the original Authorized Version is still retained as the text, and to the believing Christian the emendation is merely a matter of subsidiary interest, not of authority or inspiration. Libraries have been written maintaining that the rendering of "virgin" is the true one, and though scholars now in increasing numbers sustain the Jewish view of the text and of its application, the Church still adopts and defends the version of the "inspired" New Testament writer, who was led astray by the Septuagint translation.

The Christian objections to the Jewish interpretation of those passages which Christians assume to refer to the Messiah in general, or to Jesus Christ in particular, are varied. As Cardinal Newman mentions in the quotation just referred to, the Jewish views of prophecy fall short of the evangelical spirit, meaning thereby presumably that the Jews take a more "carnal" (or common-sense) view of the prophecies, and the fact that, whenever possible, they adopted an ethical, instead of an apocalyptic, standpoint in the interpretations of biblical events or visions, is considered by him as an unfavourable factor in Jewish exegesis. The statement of this eminent English theologian as to the difference between the Jewish and Christian commentators is fairly well founded. Not that Jews did not

indulge in eschatological and far-fetched speculations on the divine word in the Torah. The books of Ezekiel and Daniel and some of the Apocrypha, down to the Zohar and the numberless Cabbalistic writings of the modern Chassidim, show clearly enough that the Jews have not always been looking at the Sacred Scriptures and divine mysteries with the cold eyes of a rationalist critic. An extensive literature bears evidence that they did not concern themselves exclusively with earthly things, as is so often erroneously assumed. But with all the musings about things heavenly and divine, the Jew never lost entirely the earth from under his feet. A misunderstood passage could give rise to a superstition among the vulgar or to a fanciful idea among the learned, but, with the exception of certain ritual practices, such errors have left no abiding impress on Judaism. So also, though the Apocryphal part of Jewish literature prior to the time of Jesus possesses all those various conceptions of the New Testament which are supposed to be peculiarly Christological, they have not proved of the slightest influence on Jewish doctrine. Wisdom, the Logos, the Sephiroth, all found their place in Jewish theology, but they did not affect permanently the purity of Jewish Monotheism. Thus also, whatever interpretations certain passages of the Bible might have had among Jews are not necessarily of commanding importance, for no speculation or view, emanating from however prominent a source, could obtain universal recognition, unless it preserved intact Jewish tradition and sentiment. The attempt occasionally made to show that the Targum, or certain Jewish commentators, considered a particular word or passage to refer to the Messiah has, therefore, little force, for, unlike

similar quotations in the New Testament, they possess in themselves no intrinsic value or binding authority. The Jews have always felt too much love and reverence for their Sacred Scriptures to commit any falsification, either of text or interpretation, in order to suit their own purposes. The Jews have at no time maintained interpretations antagonistic to the views of the Christians in order to spite them, any more than some Jewish commentators had agreed with these opinions in order to please them. Time and study have modified the biblical exposition of the Jews as well as that of the Christians, but it is among the latter that the changes have been truly revolutionary.

A very large number of Christian theologians of the present day whose opinions are not ossified by dogma or bound by the disciplinary bonds of superior authority, have to a greater or lesser extent given up the old interpretation of Christological passages. As Christians, they do indeed admit or claim that the Old Testament prophecies received their highest fulfilment in the person of Jesus, but they are at least equally satisfied that the majority of, if not practically all, the passages in question cannot be applied according to the traditional interpretation of the Church. Many Christian scholars are already constrained to regard this as *ein überwundener Standpunkt*, a theological point of view of the old school which can be understood but not shared. This attitude is so widespread that it is almost impossible, and indeed unnecessary, to set out here testimonies to this remarkable, if entirely involuntary, justification of Judaism in one of its most important issues against Christianity. To those who are imbued with the exegetical opinions of the critical school it seems a rather

thankless task to enter on an examination of the basis of the traditional interpretation of the so-called Christological passages of the Hebrew Scriptures. Yet this mode of interpretation is so deeply rooted in the Christian mind, and still enjoys there such implicit authority, that a criticism of those passages from a Jewish standpoint is a necessity which cannot be avoided.

But here it is not enough merely to discuss whether such and such a prophecy referred to the Messiah, but it is much more to the purpose to know whether this prediction was fulfilled by Jesus. Theoretically an oracle might be made to bear various interpretations, and the fact that the original biographers of Jesus were anxious to prove that by his words and actions he did realize the dream of the seer, lends colour to the Christian interpretation and makes it so much more difficult to disprove its assumption. But these biographies, which we possess in the shape of the Gospels, afford us by their numerous discrepancies, both in themselves and in their relation towards one another, valuable opportunities to test in a decisive form the true exposition of the prophets' words and their ultimate fulfilment in history.

It is in the prophecies applied by the evangelists to the birth and death of Jesus that the centre of gravity of the whole issue lies. Throughout we are struck by the strange fact that, while it is assumed by Christians that the evangelical interpretation of Scripture is distinguished by a freedom of treatment which is particularly opposed to the narrowness by which the Jewish views are supposed to be bound, the apostles and other primitive Christians seemed to have been hypnotized by any word or phrase which appeared to suggest

anything uppermost in their minds. This is, of course, not an uncommon phenomenon in the history of exegesis, but, having regard to the far-reaching importance of the present instance, one is led to suppose that the famed evangelical freedom was exhausted in the freedom of misinterpretation.

The account of the birth and childhood of Jesus in the first chapter of Matthew commences with his genealogy, and is intended to show his Messiahship by reason of his assumed Davidic descent. Whether the genealogical tree of Jesus was preserved up till his time may be more than doubted, and the following two lists given by Matthew and Luke show that they were specially manufactured to meet the requisite proof demanded by Jewish tradition and opposition.

Matthew's List. ¹

The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham.

Abraham begat Isaac ; and Isaac begat Jacob ; and Jacob begat Judas and his brethren ;

And Judas begat Phares and Zara of Thamar ; and Phares begat Esrom ; and Esrom begat Aram ;

And Aram begat Aminadab ; and Aminadab begat Naasson ; and Naasson begat Salmon ;

And Salmon begat Booz of Rachab ; and Booz begat Obed of Ruth ; and Obed begat Jesse ;

And Jesse begat David the king ; and David the king

Luke's List. ²

And Jesus himself began to be about thirty years of age, being (as was supposed) the son of Joseph, which was the son of Heli.

Which was the son of Matthat, which was the son of Levi, which was the son of Melchi, which was the son of Janna, which was the son of Joseph,

Which was the son of Mattathias, which was the son of Amos, which was the son of Naum, which was the son of Esli, which was the son of Nagge,

Which was the son of Maath, which was the son of Matta-

¹ Matt. i. 1-16.

² Luke iii. 23-38.

begat Solomon of her that had been the wife of Urias ;

And Solomon begat Roboam ; and Roboam begat Abia ; and Abia begat Asa ;

And Asa begat Josaphat ; and Josaphat begat Joram ; and Joram begat Ozias ;

And Ozias begat Joatham ; and Joatham begat Achaz ; and Achaz begat Ezekias ;

And Ezekias begat Manasses ; and Manasses begat Amon ; and Amon begat Josias ;

And Josias begat Jechonias and his brethren, about the time they were carried away to Babylon :

And after they were brought to Babylon, Jechonias begat Salathiel ; and Salathiel begat Zorobabel ;

And Zorobabel begat Abiud ; and Abiud begat Eliakim ; and Eliakim begat Azor ;

And Azor begat Sadoc ; and Sadoc begat Achim ; and Achim begat Eliud ;

And Eliud begat Eleazar ; and Eleazar begat Matthan ; and Matthan begat Jacob ;

And Jacob begat Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus, who is called Christ.

thias, which was the son of Semei, which was the son of Joseph, which was the son of Juda,

Which was the son of Joanna, which was the son of Rhesa, which was the son of Zorobabel, which was the son of Salathiel, which was the son of Neri,

Which was the son of Melchi, which was the son of Addi, which was the son of Cosam, which was the son of Elmodam, which was the son of Er,

Which was the son of Jose, which was the son of Eliezer, which was the son of Jorim, which was the son of Matthat, which was the son of Levi,

Which was the son of Simeon, which was the son of Juda, which was the son of Joseph, which was the son of Jonan, which was the son of Eliakim,

Which was the son of Melea, which was the son of Menan, which was the son of Mattatha, which was the son of Nathan, which was the son of David,

Which was the son of Jesse, which was the son of Obed, which was the son of Booz, which was the son of Salmon, which was the son of Naason,

Which was the son of Aminadab, which was the son of Aram, which was the son of Esrom, which was the son of Phares, which was the son of Juda,

Which was the son of Jacob, which was the son of Isaac, which was the son of Abraham,

which was the son of Thara,
 which was the son of Nachor,

Which was the son of Saruch,
 which was the son of Ragau,
 which was the son of Phalec,
 which was the son of Heber,
 which was the son of Sala,

Which was the son of Cainan,
 which was the son of Arphaxad,
 which was the son of Sem,
 which was the son of Noe,
 which was the son of Lamech,

Which was the son of Mathu-
 sala, which was the son of
 Enoch, which was the son of
 Jared, which was the son of
 Maleleel, which was the son of
 Cainan,

Which was the son of Enos,
 which was the son of Seth,
 which was the son of Adam,
 which was the son of God.

It is clear from this at a glance that any attempts which may be made to reconcile the two lists by arguments and hypotheses, however ingenious, must remain futile. The two New Testament writers were both anxious to prove that Jesus belonged to the royal house of David, but, without direct reference to each other, they compiled their respective genealogical lists from as much as seemed to them available from the Hebrew Scriptures, and by filling in the blanks with such names as were suggested by necessity or fancy. While Matthew traces Jesus' descent through David's son Solomon, Luke does so from David's other son Nathan, and the names of Shealtiel and Zerubbabel, father and son, emerge somehow in the middle of both registers. It is a desperate method of reconciliation to assume without any justification whatever that Matthew gave the

genealogy of Joseph, and Luke that of Mary. Luke distinctly mentions the name of Joseph as being descended from Heli, and there is no reference in any way to Mary. It is, indeed, quite useless to attempt to collate these two lists, which are bewildering enough taken by themselves. The artificial endeavour of Matthew to show that there are fourteen genealogies during the periods from Adam to David, from David to the Babylonian captivity, and from thence to Christ, breaks down by simple arithmetic, for the third division contains only thirteen names. That the whole genealogy is mixed is further shown by the fact that while the original Jewish records¹ give the names of Ahaziah, Joash and Amaziah between Joram and Ozias, they were omitted for the evident reason that they interfered with the magic figure of fourteen. Likewise, between Josiah and Jechoniah (verse 11) there has been omitted the name of Jehoiakim, but this is a mistake of the writer, who has been led astray by the apparent similarity of the names. The same method, so far as a check is at all possible, may be observed in Luke, where, in verse 36 Arphaxad is put down as the father of Cainan, who was the father of Sala. According to the Hebrew records,² Sala was the son of Arphaxad. Cainan had somehow crept into the Septuagint version, and this was utilized by the evangelical writer for his purpose.

The assumption of Christian apologists that the genealogical records of the family of Jesus existed in his time, and that those in the New Testament are copies of such registers, is entirely gratuitous. The errors,

¹ 2 Kings viii. 24; 1 Chron. iii. 11; 2 Chron. xxii. 1, 11.

² Gen. x. 24; xi. 12; 1 Chron. i. 24.

both unconscious and intentional, contained in the two lists are enough proof that they were patched up to satisfy the claims of Davidic descent made by Jesus or by others on his behalf. But, in spite of all their evident impossibilities, they are still made to serve the same purpose. Moreover, not only does this show the impossibility of basing that claim on such a proof, but, in view of the assumed virgin-birth of Jesus, the genealogy of Joseph, who then was merely the betrothed, or protector, of his mother, has no bearing on the subject and becomes of no consequence whatever.

The supernatural birth of Jesus from a virgin is based¹ on the following words of Isaiah:² הנה העלמה הרה וילדת בן “Behold, the maiden is with child and beareth a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.” The New Testament rendering of the passage is: “Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel,”³ a translation which sets at defiance both the grammar and the sense of the original Hebrew. The mistake is due to the ignorance of Hebrew by the author of Matthew, who was led astray by the Septuagint version of העלמה as ἡ παρθένος, which has also been used by the evangelist. But the definite article ה shows that somebody was pointed to by Isaiah⁴ when he referred to העלמה, and the word עלמה is not only never used to indicate the virginity of any female

¹ Matt. i. 23. ² vii. 14. The translation is according to the amended marginal rendering of the Revised Version.

³ Strangely enough, this prophecy is given in connexion with the command of an angel to call the child by the name of Jesus. The Hebrew text says: “She shall call his name,” which the New Testament quotes as “*They* shall call his name.”

⁴ Most probably it was his own wife. Cf. Isa. viii. 3, 4, 18.

(when the word בתולה would be appropriate), but is applied indiscriminately to any young woman. Thus עלמה in Prov. xxx. 19, is not only translated "a maid," (as it is in Exod. ii. 8) but proves that it may refer to those who are *not* virgins.

The context of the passage in Isaiah shows, however, that the quotation of Matthew can only be due to an egregious blunder, which can well be understood by considering the methods of quotation then in vogue, but which cannot be excused if still cited at the present day to substantiate the assumed supernatural birth of Jesus. The seventh chapter of Isaiah sets out fully the circumstances in which the words in question were uttered by him. Rezin, the king of Assyria, and Pekah, the king of Israel, were warring against Ahaz, king of Judah, who was frightened by the turn things were taking. Isaiah then appears before him, and counsels him to have no fear, for the Lord will destroy his enemies. As the terrified Ahaz does not believe this, Isaiah, in order to calm him, offers him a sign. Referring to a woman who was then with child, Isaiah promises Ahaz that "before the child shall know how to refuse the evil and choose the good, the land whose two kings thou abhorrest shall be forsaken." In view of this, it would be preposterous to imagine for a moment that Isaiah endeavoured to allay the fears of Ahaz by referring him, as an evident sign, to the miraculous birth of Christ seven centuries after. Were it not that the evangelist has committed himself to this misinterpretation in connexion with the divinity of Jesus, it would require very much courage to commit and defend such an exegetical abnormity.

Not only did the author of Matthew arrange the

Scriptures for his special ends, but his misconception of certain passages seems to have suggested to him events which, though of striking importance, were unknown to the other evangelists. We are told that, to evade the danger threatened by Herod, Joseph and Mary fled with the child to Egypt, "that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, Out of Egypt have I called my son."¹ It would be hard to find a more far-fetched quotation than this one. The verse in Hosea (xi. 1) runs thus: "When Israel was a child, then I loved him, and called My son out of Egypt." Israel is referred to as God's son, and His first-born son, in other parts of the Jewish Scriptures, notably when Pharaoh is called upon by Moses to let the children of Israel depart from Egypt.² But the application of that passage to Jesus must be considered to be the more inappropriate, as not only is there not a shadow of a doubt to whom it refers, but it is not even adaptable to that peculiar method of interpretation by which almost any word or incident can be turned into any desired shape. The prophet Hosea, referring to God's love of Israel, proceeds immediately to speak of its perverse ways: "they sacrificed unto Baalim, and burned incense to graven images."³ No stretch of the imagination could find in this an allusion to Jesus, and Christians would surely not think it a reference worthy of application to him.

We are then told by Matthew that Herod, finding himself disappointed by the escape of Jesus, ordered that all the children in Bethlehem from two years and under be killed. "Then was fulfilled that which was

¹ Matt. ii. 15.

² Exod. iv. 22, 23.

³ xi. 2.

spoken by Jeremiah the prophet, saying, In Ramah was there a voice heard, lamentation and weeping, and great mourning, Rachel weeping for her children; and she would not be comforted, because they are not.”¹ This slaying of the children at Bethlehem, an act extraordinary in its cruelty and caprice, is not mentioned by the contemporary historians or even by any of the other evangelists, and we are, therefore, again led to assume that ignorance of the Scriptures led Matthew to imagine the story. It could certainly not have been the fulfilment of a prophecy, for Jeremiah spoke of the restoration of Israel to its land, and, in response to the grief of Rachel at the exile of the children of her people, there comes God’s promise that “they shall come again from the land of the enemy.”² There is here not the slightest scope for the idea that Jeremiah prophesied thereby the slaying of the children at Bethlehem, nor is there any warrant for Matthew’s use of the passage for his purpose. That the stories of the flight to Egypt and the massacre of the babies at Bethlehem were merely invented to meet supposed prophecies is shown by the fact that Luke relates in their stead the presentation of the child Jesus in the Temple at Jerusalem. That this misconstruction of Scriptural texts was not entirely accidental, may also be seen by the Old Testament quotation in Matthew in regard to the place of Jesus’ birth. According to the supposed requirements of the prophets, Jesus was to have been born at Bethlehem, but since he was known as a native of Nazareth, it was necessary to show that the Scriptures were also instrumental in the selection of the latter place. For the writer seems not to have known that the parents of Jesus were

¹ Matt. ii. 17, 18.

² Jer. xxxi. 15-17.

likewise natives of Nazareth, and he presumed that they only came there by an accident, so that the Scriptures might be justified. "And he came and dwelt in a city called Nazareth: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet: He shall be called a Nazarene."¹ This prophecy, however, is not even to be found in the Jewish Scriptures.

A criticism of the quotations cited shows the peculiar difficulties with which Christian expositors of the Bible have to contend. The authors of the Gospels are considered to have been inspired, and their interpretations have, therefore, to be implicitly adopted, if not in the letter, at least in spirit. It is a delicate position, which the adherent to any historic faith ought well to appreciate, but one who does not submit to the authority of the apostles cannot shut his eyes and swallow manifest contradictions and errors. And while it is a very easy matter to demonstrate the misinterpretation of such passages as have been quoted, the critic is put to an additional disadvantage where proof has either to be sought by negative internal evidence or where a check is not at all available. As we have seen, the New Testament writer, whenever he appealed to the Hebrew Scriptures to corroborate his view of the event narrated by him, would take care to bring both sides in accord, so that it is sometimes impossible to say whether an incident suggested the quotation or the quotation suggested the incident. To complicate matters, Christian theologians are content to say that if certain cited passages are not appropriate in form, they are so in substance, whilst any word or phrase which gives some apparent sanction to Christian theories is clung to

¹ Cf. ii. 19-23.

according to its literal or misunderstood translation with a tenacity which defies all sense or reasoning.

An example of the latter category of texts is the following from Micah (v. 1), by which Matthew (ii. 6) refers to Bethlehem as the birthplace of the Messiah, and the birth of Jesus there as proof of his Messiahship: "But thou, Beth-lehem Ephrathah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel." This prediction is not truly Messianic, for it deals with events of the time; and the promise that there would arise one who would lead back the Jewish captives to their own land was fulfilled by Zerubbabel. But faith gave it a wider scope, and the wealth of Micah's language helped to place the prediction among those which still awaited their fulfilment. Nevertheless, Matthew's deduction therefrom that the Messiah was to be *born* in Bethlehem is a mistaken one, and no other Old Testament writer bears out this view. The prophet merely referred to a scion of the house of David,¹ and contrasted the greatness of his fame with the insignificance of the place from which the family traced its descent. Nor does the concluding part of the verse: "Whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting," lend colour to the assumption that it proves the eternal existence of the Messiah. The phrases **מִיָּמֵי עוֹלָם** and **מִקְדָּם**—"from of old" and "from everlasting"—are not mystical or obscure enough to allow any such extraordinary interpretation. **מִיָּמֵי קֶדֶם**, "from the days of old," is used by the same prophet in reference to the covenant made by God with the patriarchs.

¹ "The son of that Ephrathite of Beth-lehem in Judah, whose name was Jesse" (1 Sam. xvii. 12).

Isaiah speaks of Tyre as a city "whose antiquity is of ancient days."¹

The New Testament itself bears out that it is the Christological interpretation of that passage which is more or less responsible for the story of the birth of Jesus at Bethlehem. Matthew and Luke have, indeed, given circumstantial details of his birth at Bethlehem, but these are entirely at variance with each other; Matthew considered that Bethlehem was the original home of Joseph and Mary, and that it was only by a providential turn that they settled "in a city called Nazareth,"² while Luke assumed, on the other hand, that their stay at Bethlehem was merely an incident due to a special event, and that in the end "they returned into Galilee, to their own city Nazareth."³ Neither Mark nor John seems to have known anything of the legends connected with Bethlehem.⁴

Apart from the stories of the nativity, so full of glaring contradictions, of the mythological magi and their pursuit of a star which performed the impossible feat of shining exactly over the spot where the child was born, of the numerous legends, each of which more than strains our credulity, Bethlehem is never mentioned afterwards in the New Testament as the birth-place of Jesus, nor did he ever maintain any relations with that town. When there was raised the taunt: "Can

¹ Isa. xxiii. 7.

² Cf. ii. 1, 19-23.

³ ii. 39.

⁴ The census which is stated to have led the parents of Jesus to Bethlehem took place ten years later than that in which he was born, viz., after the deposition of Archelaus. Cf. Josephus, *Antiquities*, xvii. 13, 5; xviii. 1, 1; xviii. 2, 1. Besides, it is not likely that the Roman authorities would have required that Joseph and Mary, who were only betrothed, should have to go to Bethlehem for the purpose of taxation, merely because some of *his* forefathers had lived there about 1,000 years previous.

there any good thing come out of Nazareth ? ”¹ or “ What, shall the Christ come out of Galilee ? ”² the Bethlehemite descent of Jesus was not brought up by his friends as a convincing reply. Among them he was known as Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph,³ and the Ebionites and other Jewish adherents of Christianity, who had been in personal touch with Jesus, denied the royal origin and the authenticity of the genealogies ascribed to him.⁴

The inauguration of the public work of Jesus is thus introduced by Matthew⁵ : “ And leaving Nazareth he came and dwelt in Capernaum, which is by the sea, in the borders of Zebulun and Naphtali : that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Isaiah the prophet, saying : The land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, toward the sea, beyond Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles, the people which sat in darkness saw a great light, and to them that sat in the region of the shadow of death, to them did light spring up.”⁶ Here the evangelist has undoubtedly made effective use of the eloquent declaration of Isaiah, but it can nevertheless not be admitted that it refers to the advent of Jesus. The quotation commences thus : “ When at first he lightly afflicted the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, and afterwards did more grievously afflict her by the way of the sea, beyond Jordan, in Galilee of the Gentiles, etc.” The prophet refers here to the providential destruction of the mighty host of Sennacherib by the angel of the Lord, and announces a period of great blessing and joy for the nation. “ For the yoke of his burden and the

¹ John i. 46.

² Ibid., vii. 41.

³ Ibid., i. 45.

⁴ Renan, *Vie de Jésus*, ch. xv.

⁵ iv. 13-16.

⁶ Isa. ix.

staff of his shoulder, the rod of his oppressor, Thou hast broken as in the day of Midian.¹ For all the armour of the armed man in the tumult, and the garments rolled in blood shall even be for burning, for fuel of fire.”

Certainly this graphic description of the utter confusion and rout of Sennacherib's army cannot be mistaken, nor is it possible in any legitimate way to refer it to the days of the Messiah. Isaiah continues to point out another existing factor in this state of affairs and as a happy token for the future. This was the son of King Ahaz, Hezekiah, whose reign ushered in a new era, distinguished by a remarkable religious revival, as well as by the peace and prosperity of the people. “For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called wonderful counsellor, mighty God, father of eternity, prince of peace. Of the increase of his government and of peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David and upon his kingdom to establish it and to uphold it with judgment and with righteousness from henceforth even for ever.” But the overwhelming magnificence of diction and the exuberant Oriental imagery of Isaiah has provided here a fruitful opportunity for those who maintain that the Hebrew prophet believed and proclaimed the divinity of the Messiah. Neither context nor the licence of prophetic style is allowed to hold good, but the literal interpretation of words is insisted upon. Fortunately, Jesus himself, in his claim of being the son of God, pointed out ² that the term “god” is sometimes

¹ The destruction of Sennacherib's army is compared to the memorable defeat of the Midianites by Gideon.

² John x. 34 ffg.

also applied in the Scriptures to mere men, and he quoted the eighty-second Psalm, where God "judgeth among the gods." The psalmist does not scruple to apostrophize the heads and rulers of the nation in the following words: "I said, ye are gods and all of you sons of the Most High, nevertheless ye shall die like men." On the authority of Jesus himself, we know that these "gods" were not only "like" men, but were in reality mere men; otherwise, if we are to accept the plain meaning of words, we must assume that the author of that psalm was undoubtedly a polytheist. If, however, in spite of this, we form no such conception, we have to permit the same rule to hold good also in the case of Isaiah, for in both instances the genius of Judaism, the innumerably repeated and unmistakable declarations of the absolute unity of the Deity do not allow the faintest shade of an idea which makes it possible for any one to take the form of the Eternal or to share the attributes of His divinity. There is no text or doctrine which can in any way be put in the balance against the declaration of the prophet to Israel: "Ye are My witnesses, saith the Lord, and My servant whom I have chosen: that ye may know and believe Me and understand that I am He; before Me there was no God formed, neither shall there be after Me. I, even I, am the Lord; and beside Me there is no Saviour." ¹

In the face of this, it is surely not worth consideration whether the verse: "In the beginning God created heaven and earth," because the word אלהים (God) is in the plural, proves the existence of a Triune Godhead,² since this plural of אלה is used always, with hardly an excep-

¹ Isa. xliii. 10, 11. ² Gen. i. 1, ברא, "created," is in the singular.

tion, even when it refers to men.¹ Of the same value is the Trinitarian exposition of the passage: "And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness,"² especially as following this it is said: "And God created man in His own image." But while such theological jugglery has now become obsolete for all practical purposes, there are several texts which, coming with the authority of the evangelists, are still tenaciously held to as bearing a Christologically Trinitarian interpretation. The second psalm has offered a particularly grateful field, since it speaks both of a "son," and an "anointed." The word "son" in the Jewish Scriptures seems, indeed, to have had a fatal fascination for the primitive Christians, anxious to prove Jesus as the Son of God. The author of Hebrews, in quoting the verse: "Thou art My son, this day have I begotten thee," follows immediately for the same purpose with the passage: "I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to Me a son."³ It is the straining after the word "son" which led to the translation of נשקו בר in Psalm ii. 12 as "kiss the son." בר, as the Chaldaic term for "son," can have no justification in this purely Hebrew composition, and the Revised Version, while faithfully retaining the traditional Christian rendering, adds as a marginal note: "Some ancient versions render, Lay hold of (or, receive) instruction; others, Worship in purity." It is the latter which is the more acceptable version. The passage about father and son, just quoted, invites no argument, for, in the prosaic narratives

¹ Exod. xxi. 6, where it is rendered "judges." This is another instance where the word "God" in Hebrew bears an altogether different sense. Cf. also Exod. xxii. 7, 8.

² Gen. i. 26.

³ Heb. i. 5.

in which it occurs, it refers, without any ambiguity, to Solomon, and consists of the promise of the Lord to him : " I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to Me a son." This affords another proof of the reckless carelessness with which biblical texts were pressed into service by the New Testament writers, and of the total lack of authority that must consequently attend on their method of quotation. Once this fact is recognized, it becomes superfluous to make any laborious attempt at disproving them. The second Psalm, in spite of its poetical style and Messianic tinge, was composed in honour of David, the conquering king of Israel. He was the anointed of the Lord,¹ and like his son Solomon, or any other pious Israelite, he was termed a son of God. The phrase " this day have I begotten thee," is purely rhetorical and cannot be taken in any literal sense, as God, from the monotheistic point of view, cannot be expected to " beget," nor would this take place on " this day." ² The poem is a fitting glorification of the warrior and psalmist, whose prowess and piety were invested with so much glamour and glory.

The 110th Psalm also celebrates the triumph of a victorious king. In the second Psalm he is apostrophized in the following manner : " Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron ; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel," and in the 110th it is said of him that " He hath filled the places with dead bodies ; he hath stricken through the head over a wide land." While both these Psalms are graphic and virile descriptions

¹ " Then Samuel took the horn of oil, and anointed him in the midst of his brethren, and the Spirit of the Lord came mightily upon David from that day forward " (1 Sam. xvi. 13).

² Cf. Deut. xxxii. 18.

of an earthly monarch, who, after terrible slaughter and relentless pursuit, crushes the foe under his iron heel, they certainly do not represent the picture of Jesus as painted by the evangelists, of the Prince of Peace, whose kingdom is not of this world. But just as in the second Psalm the term "son of God" exercised an irresistible fascination, so the introductory passage of the 110th Psalm has been adopted as a proof of the divinity of Christ. It runs thus: "The Lord saith unto my lord: Sit thou at My right hand until I make thine enemies thy footstool." The error follows from a want of understanding of the original נֶאֱמַר ה' לַאֲדֹנָי, which should be translated: "The word of YHWH (God) to my lord." אֲדֹנָי, Lord, can be used, as in English, both in referring to the Almighty and as a mere title,¹ and is also the equivalent of the German "Herr" or the French "Seigneur." In the Psalm, "The word of YHWH to my lord," is an expression used by a courtly minstrel to introduce the celebration by him of the valorous deeds of his royal master. "Sit thou at my right hand," is naturally only meant in the figurative sense of being high in the favour of the Eternal, since there can be no question of the right or left hand of God, or of any one sitting at His side. The concluding part of the verse, "until I make thine enemies thy footstool," as well as the martial tenor of the whole Psalm, show the utter inappropriateness of applying it to Christ.

Like the divinity of Jesus, so the Christian doctrine of salvation through the merit of his passion and death, is based on prophecies in the Hebrew Scriptures. It is particularly the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah, in which

¹ Certainly, אֲדֹנָי in the singular, as is used in the quotation in question, can only be an earthly title.

the tragic end of Jesus seemed to be mirrored, and in which the features of his humiliation and subsequent glory appeared to be faithfully predicted.

There the great Jewish prophet had sketched out with an infinite pathos the striking picture of a "servant of the Lord," who, misconceived and misrepresented, suffered for the good of mankind, but, truth conquering in the end, the noble part played by him in the achievement is at last recognized. Who was this "servant of the Lord" ?

We are fortunately not left to our own devices, for, although the name of the "servant of the Lord" is not mentioned in the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah, the preceding and following chapters leave no doubt whatever on the point. The Lord is constantly made to address Himself to "Israel, My servant, Jacob, whom I have chosen, the seed of Abraham, My friend. Thou whom I have taken from the ends of the earth, and called thee from the corners thereof and said unto thee, Thou art my servant." ¹ There can, therefore, be no question but that in the eyes of the prophet it is the Jewish people which has been selected as "the servant of the Lord." To the old appeal to Israel is now added the declaration, "And My servant whom I have chosen"; there is the repeated refrain, "O Jacob, My servant, and Israel whom I have chosen"; or, "O Jacob, My servant, and thou Jeshurun, whom I have chosen"; or, "Jacob and Israel, thou art My servant"; or, simply "my servant." ² It might sometimes appear as if the prophet had in his mind one particular man, and it has been suggested with some show of reason that the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah refers to Jeremiah. As

¹ Isa. xli. 8, 9. ² Cf. *ibid.*, xliii. 10; xliv. 1, 2, 21.

a homiletical quotation, it could, of course, be applied also to Jesus of Nazareth or some other great martyr, whose sufferings have served the salvation of mankind. But the prophet's words bear no such construction, and, at most, we can assume that he spoke not of the people at large, but of the faithful remnant of Israel, which is conscious of the mission entrusted to it by God. In the vision, this mission and the glory of Israel are depicted in glowing language, but, even reduced to reality, who can contemplate the moving history of the Jews, their martyrdom and their triumphs, without feeling that here is a people, which, alone of all the nations of the earth, suffered for righteousness' sake?¹ It is this idea which underlies the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah. Though the Churches have not yet publicly confessed it, is it not all the same a fact that through the constancy of the Jews their Sacred Scriptures were preserved for the benefit of posterity, and that, in spite of all their failings, from which Christians themselves have not been exempt, it was the despised and misunderstood Jews who have been the vessels in which salvation has been brought to the world? Is it quite realized that Christianity itself owes its existence entirely to those Jews who took upon themselves the Messianic faith because they believed it to be the fulfilment of Jewish hopes? Were not these true pillars of Christianity fervent Jews, and did not even Paul, "the ugly, little Jew," as Renan called him,² have an unaltered conviction in the greatness of his people? If we could imagine ideal Justice speaking out aloud, should not the Gentiles

¹ This idea is more fully set out in chap. ii. p. 48 ff.

² The extant descriptions of Paul's personal appearance show that he also had "no form nor comeliness."

who found salvation in Christianity confess their former error in the words of Isaiah ? Do not at the present time even Protestant detractors of the Jews proclaim the priceless indebtedness of the world to “the ancient people of God” ? Did not Voltaire, as do so many of his followers to-day, rail at the Jews for being the originators of Christianity and, therefore, the source of all evil, and yet what nations have struggled and achieved so much for the cause of liberty of mind and of conscience as the despised Jews ?

The Christian dogmatist who is usually wont to refer contemptuously to the “Judaic narrowness” of the Jewish interpretation of Scripture, maintains that the precise meaning of the utterances of Isaiah, conveying the notion of a vicarious atonement, cannot be properly applied to the people of Israel. But leaving out for the present the consideration whether or not the words of the prophet constitute the proof that the death of Christ was an atonement for the sins of the world, it must be pointed out that other passages in the same connexion cannot be fittingly applied to Jesus.¹ It must again be emphatically repeated that the prophet’s reference to “the servant of the Lord” *directly* applies to Israel, and that, as has already been shown, there can be no ambiguity on the point. It is a purely arbitrary selection to allocate identical declarations to the Jews or to Jesus, as may be considered desirable by preconceived dogmatic views. Yet these are the straits to which Christian theologians are reduced. For

¹ I may perhaps be excused if I do not go into a minute examination of the text, tending to show that the prophecy was not actually fulfilled by Jesus. Such a puerile criticism proves little one way or another.

if "the servant of the Lord" be the man-God Jesus, who atoned by his death for the sins of all mankind, how then could the prophet have addressed to God Himself, who came to save the world, this strange remonstrance: "Hear, ye deaf; and look, ye blind, that ye may see. Who is blind but my servant? or deaf as my messenger that I send? Who is blind as he that is made perfect, and blind as the Lord's servant? Thou seest many things, but thou observest not; his ears are open, but he heareth not."¹ But this incongruity is at once removed if it is recognized, what the prophet himself states over and over again, that he refers to Israel, with his failings and his virtues, as the humble and humiliated martyr, spurned by the world, yet being a source of blessing to the human race. The traditional conception of the selection of the descendants of Abraham for a high purpose of universal import is expressed by the seer in language of an unusually lofty style, and in his grand vision the Jews become a light to the Gentiles, and in his ecstasy he exclaims in the name of God: "Thou art my servant, O Israel, in whom I will be glorified."²

Besides the Christological prophecies, there are a number of others which have been pressed into service by the evangelists for the support of certain of their views. Jeremiah,³ for instance, refers to the ineffective results of the covenant made by God with the people of Israel when they went out of Egypt, and predicts that the covenant of the future would be written in their hearts, so that He "will be their God and they shall be My people." In this connexion, Christian theologians have

¹ Isa. xlii. 18-20.

² Isa. xlix. 3.

³ xxxi. 31 fig.

also endeavoured to prove that the repeated injunctions of the prophets to observe the commands of the Torah "for ever" do not exclude its abolition in the course of time, as "for ever" is sometimes only an expression denoting an age. It is of no consequence to the present issue whether or not a new covenant may have been desirable or even intended; we are only concerned to know whether the words of Jeremiah are a sufficient basis for a change of so fundamental a character as is involved in the supersession of the covenant made by God with the people of Israel, and of the Torah of Moses, which the Lord commanded them faithfully to observe unto the end of all time. The rhetorical style of Jeremiah does not permit us to take his utterances about the "new" covenant literally, for it is no more than a striking emphasis of his constant demand for a religion of the heart, as opposed to a merely external ritual.¹ And, apart from the incongruity of Christian dogmatism, which demands on the one hand that the casual expression "a new covenant" must be taken literally, while, on the other hand, the repeated declarations of the eternal duration of the Torah of Moses were not to be understood in their full significance, Jeremiah himself furnishes us with the means of gauging his meaning.² In the name

¹ That Judaism and religion of the heart are identical is shown by the following declaration of the "legalistic" prophet Ezekiel to Israel: "A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. And I will put My spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and *ye shall keep My judgments and do them*" (chap. xxxvi. 26, 27). It should be noted that the promised new spirit was not to abrogate, but strengthen the force of, the Law, which also commanded to circumcise the foreskin of the heart. (Cf. Deut. x. 16.)

² Jer. vii. 22, 23.

of the Lord, he solemnly tells the Israelites that they had not been commanded to offer sacrifices to Him, but what was wanted was that they should do the Will of God. The Christian, who believes that the sacrifices were truly a part of that divine dispensation which culminated in the great sacrifice of Jesus, can surely not admit the categorical statement of the prophet, unless he adopts the view (which must, of course, also extend to the expression "a new covenant") that Jeremiah, aglow with a feeling of indignation at the superficiality of the current faith, condemned without hesitation or reservation the popular ideas and practices, which were a bar to the dissemination of true religion.

Nor, on examination, does the Christian interpretation of the passage in question hold good in the slightest degree. Jeremiah addresses "the house of Israel and the house of Judah" who were brought out of Egypt (clearly, the descendants of Abraham according to the flesh) and he promises that the new covenant would not fail, but be perfect in its results: "I will be their God and they shall be My people" and "they shall all know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them, saith the Lord," "for I will forgive their iniquity and their sin will I remember no more." Taken from the Christian view of events, this prophecy has not been fulfilled. It was the Jews who were intended to profit by the new covenant, but it has brought them no spiritual happiness of any kind. If it be contended that it was the Jews who deprived themselves of the blessings of the new covenant, where remains the value of prophecy, which, we must assume, predicts that which will actually happen? Else the exact opposite can always be explained on account of attendant circumstances, over

which, so to speak, Divine Providence has no control. Further, apart from other reasons, Christianity cannot claim to have superseded Judaism, for the new covenant of Christ has not by any means shown that perfect result which the prophet anticipated as a contrast to the imperfect obedience rendered to the covenant of old.¹

Moreover, the announcement as to the "new covenant" is most significantly followed by a declaration as to the eternal election of Israel as a nation of the Lord. Referring to the manifestations of nature, the prophet says: "If these ordinances depart from Me, saith the Lord, then the seed of Israel also shall cease from being a nation before me for ever. Thus saith the Lord: If heaven above can be measured and the foundations of the earth searched out beneath, then will I also cast off all the seed of Israel for all that they have done, saith the Lord."²

There are various Old Testament passages quoted by Christian authorities which deserve only to be slightly touched upon. For instance, the warning of God to Adam that "on the day" on which he eats of the Tree of Knowledge he will surely die,³ or that the seed of Eve would bruise the Serpent's head,⁴ are referred to

¹ And it may not be out of place here to point out that the announcement of the "new" covenant in the thirty-first chapter of Jeremiah, on which Christians lay so much stress, is immediately preceded by the following declaration, which disposes effectively of the Christian conception of atonement: "In those days they shall say no more, the fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge. But every one shall die for his own iniquity: every man that eateth the sour grapes, his teeth shall be set on edge." (Cf. xxxi. 29, 30.)

² Jer. xxxi. 35-37.

³ Gen. ii. 17.

⁴ Ibid., iii. 15.

as evidences of the sentence of death pronounced on all the descendants of Adam, and that Jesus had crushed Satan, who was personified in the serpent. It can only be said here that while Adam did not die "on that day," death is the natural end of man, and Satan's power still extends even over the believers in Christ, who might reasonably be expected to be immune from the influences of the tempter. A remarkable piece of exegetical jugglery is furnished by the argument in Galatians iii. 16, that the promises were made to Abraham: "He saith not, and to seeds, as of many; but as of one, and to thy seed, which is Christ." Of course, the Hebrew uses the word "seed" in the sense of descendants: "And thy seed I will make as the dust of the earth."¹ Likewise Paul quotes in support of his theory of the ultimate conversion of the Jews the following: "And so all Israel shall be saved: even as it is written, There shall come out of Zion the deliverer and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob";² whereas the original passage runs thus: "A redeemer shall come to Zion and unto them that turn from transgression in Jacob,"³ and while Paul adds: "and this is my covenant unto them when I shall take away their sins,"⁴ the quotation should conclude instead with the promise that the words of the Lord through the prophet shall not depart from Israel for ever. In both cases the sense of the prophecy has been entirely changed to suit Paul's argument in favour of his views, and we may here fairly accuse him of a deliberate misrendering of the text. The prediction of Moses that God would send a prophet "like unto

¹ Gen. xiii. 16.

² Rom. xi. 26.

³ Isa. lix. 20.

⁴ Rom. xi. 27.

me ” (or, “ as he raised up me ”)¹ has been taken to mean that Jesus was a prophet equal in authority to Moses, and that, therefore, as Moses had given the Torah, Jesus was justified in abolishing it. If this reasoning be adopted, it is necessary to point out that Jesus is thus not only claimed to be “ like ” Moses, who only received the Law, but is considered to be greater in every respect. The passage really means nothing more than that other prophets would arise in Israel after Moses. The declaration of Haggai² that “ the glory of the latter house shall be greater than that of the former ” is assumed to mean that the second Temple would be distinguished above the first by having been visited by Jesus. The “ latter house ” refers to the Temple to be erected in Messianic times, and to point the difference that would exist between that and the second Temple, which was often filled with strife and then destroyed, it is here said : “ And in this place will I give peace.”

The Gospel according to John tells us that while the side of Jesus was pierced by a spear, the soldiers did not break his legs, as they did in the case of those crucified together with Jesus, so that the Scripture might be fulfilled : “ A bone of him shall not be broken.”³ And again another Scripture saith, They shall look on him whom they have pierced.”⁴ The desire to see Scripture fulfilled has led the evangelist to make a far-fetched reference to the observance in connexion with the eating of the Paschal lamb, and it seems as if the fatal mention of an “ only son ” in a passage in Zechariah has led to the citation in this connexion.

¹ Deut. xviii. 15 ; Acts iii. 22. Cf. marginal note of the R.V.

² ii. 9.

³ Exod. xii. 46.

⁴ John xix. 31-37.

The context shows that the prediction could not refer to Jesus, nor could it be applied to the hoped-for confession by the Jews of the wrong they had done him. To make this clear, it is sufficient to quote the following introduction to the prophecy: "And it shall come to pass in that day that I will seek to destroy all the nations that come up against Jerusalem. And I will pour upon the house of David and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem the spirit of grace and supplication, and they shall look unto me whom they have pierced, etc."¹ The partition of the garments of Jesus among the Roman soldiers and the casting of lots by them for his coat, is said to have taken place "that the Scripture might be fulfilled, which saith, They parted my raiment among them, and for my vesture they did cast lots."² The whole significance of the incident and of the use of the Hebrew Scriptures by the evangelists is laid bare by the pregnant sentence which immediately follows the above passage: "These things *therefore* the soldiers did."³ This is a good illustration of the state of mind of the early Christians in approaching the Old Testament, and the purpose and value of their biblical quotations.

A similar roundabout story is that relating to the ultimate destination of the thirty pieces of silver which Judas received for his betrayal. The New Testament⁴ refers us by mistake to Jeremiah for a passage which is to be found in Zechariah xi. 13. The reference to the thirty pieces of silver for which the Jewish "chief

¹ Zech. xii. 10. It should be observed that the New Testament quotation has it: "And they shall look unto *him*, etc.," which conveniently transforms the pronoun from the first to the third person, changing thereby entirely the sense as given by the Massoretic text.

² Ps. xxii. 18.

³ John xix. 23, 24.

⁴ Matt. xxvii. 9, 10.

priests" bought the potter's field has in Zechariah not the remotest connexion with any such event as the New Testament relates, and is only another attempt at "fulfilling" the Scriptures. In Acts (i. 18) we are told that Judas bought the field himself and was killed there by an accident; according to Matthew, it was the High Priest who bought the field and Judas hanged himself in remorse, while Zechariah says that the money was cast into "the mint (or treasury) of the house of the Lord."

Sometimes a fanciful method of interpretation will be used to bolster up a preconceived idea, as the words: "Thou wilt not suffer thine holy one to see corruption,"¹ are brought up in support of the theory of the resurrection of Jesus, whereas the psalmist actually refers to himself only. But sometimes a citation is deliberately changed to suit the circumstances in view. Thus, as an additional proof of the resurrection, the passage: "Thou hast received gifts for men" is turned into: "He gave gifts unto men."² Or, there is assumed to be the fulfilment of a prediction which is nowhere to be found, as is the case with the following declaration ascribed to Jesus: "He that believeth on me, as the Scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water."³

This straining after effect, coupled with ignorance of the Hebrew idiom and mode of thought, has produced strange errors, as, for instance, in the triumphal entry of Jesus into Jerusalem, "riding upon an ass and upon the foal of an ass."⁴ It would seem that, in this case,

Ps. xvi. 10; Acts xiii. 35.

² Ps. lxxviii. 18; Eph. iv. 8.

³ John vii. 38.

⁴ Zech. ix. 9; Matt. xxi. 5.

Jesus, or the enthusiasts who accompanied him, tried to shape his acts according to the Scriptures. We are, therefore, told that, before entering Jerusalem, Jesus sent two of his disciples, "saying unto them, Go into the village over against you, and straightway ye shall find an ass tied, and a colt with her: loose them and bring them unto me. And if any man say ought unto you, ye shall say, The Lord hath need of them; and straightway he will send them. All this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying, Tell ye the daughter of Zion, Behold, thy king cometh unto thee, meek, and riding upon an ass, and a colt the foal of an ass. And the disciples went and did even as Jesus appointed them, and brought the ass, and the colt, and put on them their garments, and he sat thereon (or, upon them, *ἐπάνω αὐτῶν*)." The fact that Jesus and his disciples went out of their way to procure "an ass and a colt the foal of an ass," and that Jesus was placed on the two animals at the same time, to fulfil a Scriptural passage which merely expresses a redundancy of form common in Hebrew, is sufficient evidence that the quotations from the Old Testament were not spontaneous manifestations of divine inspiration, but artificial and cumbrous devices of controversialists, hard driven to find a justification for their claims and arguments, and, therefore, not only entirely devoid of any authority, but subject to the legitimate suspicion which such a method engenders. The endeavours in certain instances to take every possible advantage of most irrelevant texts and to shape the narration of events accordingly, are sufficient to condemn the course adopted by the New Testament writers, and to cause all their quotations to be submitted to a critical scrutiny. Here, if

anywhere, it may be said : *falsus in uno, falsus in omnibus*.

The views which a discerning Christian believer must take of this aspect of the evidences of Christianity is best shown by the following unconscious admission of Cardinal Newman, speaking as a Christian to Christians : " We readily submit our reason on competent authority, and accept certain events as an accomplishment of predictions which seem very far removed from them ; as in the passage ' Out of Egypt have I called My Son.' Nor do we find a difficulty when St. Paul appeals to a text of the Old Testament, which stands otherwise in our Hebrew copies ; as the words ' A body hast thou prepared Me.' We receive such difficulties on faith, and leave them to take care of themselves. Much less do we consider mere fulness in the interpretation, or definiteness, or again strangeness, as a sufficient reason for depriving the text, or the action to which it is applied, of the advantage of such interpretation. We make it no objection that the words themselves come short of it, or that the sacred writer did not contemplate it, or that a previous fulfilment satisfies it. A reader who came to the inspired text by himself, beyond the influence of that traditional acceptation which happily encompasses it, would be surprised to be told that the prophet's words, ' A virgin shall conceive etc,' or ' Let all the angels of God worship him,' refer to our Lord ; but assuming the intimate connexion between Judaism and Christianity, and the inspiration of the New Testament, we do not scruple to believe it." ¹

It is, however, not alone this modern Father of the Church who confesses that it is only faith which could

¹ *The Development of Christian Doctrine*, p. 103.

make him see in certain prophecies a reference to Christ. The apostles themselves, for instance, did not understand the significance of the death and atonement of Jesus which we are to suppose is clearly foretold in the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah, until the force of events obliged them to seek for an explanation of the unexpected and ignominious crucifixion of their Messiah. Hence there was evolved the idea that the sufferings of the Messiah were already foreseen by the prophets of old, but the stupefaction of the disciples at the tragic end of Jesus is evidence that this was a mere afterthought. Although Jesus repeatedly told them of his coming sufferings and death, they never anticipated them, and were stunned when the blow came. There could, for instance, not have been a more explicit warning than the one contained in the following narrative: "And he took unto him the twelve, and said unto them, Behold we go up to Jerusalem, and all the things that are written by the prophets shall be accomplished unto the son of man. For he shall be delivered up unto the Gentiles, and shall be mocked and shamefully entreated and spit upon: and they shall scourge and kill him, and the third day he shall rise again. *And they understood none of these things*; and this saying was hid from them, and they perceived not the things that were said."¹ Yet, though even his resurrection was unmistakably announced by Jesus (if we are to accept the testimony of the Gospels) we are told in all the descriptions of that event that the apostles did not know of it, and, in fact, they could not believe, or even grasp, what they thought was mere "idle talk."² We are told: "For as yet they knew not the Scripture,

¹ Luke xviii. 31-34.

² Ibid., xxiv. 11.

that he must rise again from the dead.”¹ It is only necessary to reflect for a moment in order to appreciate the significance of this predicament, in which even the immediate disciples of Jesus who had been in daily contact with him, and to whom he had revealed his innermost thoughts, found themselves when judging Jesus according to the Scriptures.² Who dare, therefore, speak about the “carnal” minds of the Jews when the apostles also expected the restoration of the earthly throne of David and imagined themselves sitting on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel? Are the Christians of later times more “spiritual” than the apostles because events proved that Jesus neither founded an earthly kingdom, as the Jews expected of their Messiah, nor came back to reign over the world as he promised, and as became the firm hope of his disciples? If they who knew the mind of their master, went wrong in their judgment and expectations, who can condemn those who have not been so favoured?

The Jewish view of Christological passages practically coincides with the scientific interpretation of them by the most distinguished non-Jewish biblical scholars of the present day. Here, as in so many other aspects of the long controversy between Judaism and Christianity, the growing independence of thought within the progressive sections of the Church has brought about a remarkable vindication of the Jewish contentions. It is now admitted by almost every Protestant biblical critic who has a reputation to uphold that loose and disjointed figures of speech or passages cannot be taken in their literal sense without reference to the time and

¹ John xx. 9.

² On the arrest of Jesus, “all the disciples left him, and fled.” Matt. xxvii. 56; Mark xiv. 50.

context in which they were delivered. Finally, if the traditional manner of the Christian exposition of Scripture regarding the Messiah be extended to the whole text, then there should also have to come to pass that remarkable, if rather improbable, state of affairs when "the wolf shall dwell with the lamb, the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them." ¹ But though this may be interpreted in a metaphorical sense, it is contended that in "those days" when the Lord "shall set up an ensign for the nations," He shall also "assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth." ² And the Jew does not only look forward to his own freedom from physical and spiritual thralldom, but anticipates that the whole of mankind will share these blessings. The appearance of the Anointed is to usher in a new era of universal peace and happiness, the Messianic times—that æon of human felicity so fondly described by the Jewish prophets. Whatever be in dispute, there cannot be any doubt but that the advent of the Messiah is to put an end to all war and bloodshed, to hatred and strife, crime and error, and that this epoch is to synchronize with the reign of concord and love between man and man, with justice in social relations and with the supremacy of truth and enlightenment in every human soul.

We know that this kingdom of God foretold by the Hebrew prophets has not yet been vouchsafed to us, and, therefore, the Jews maintain that the Messiah and the Messianic times are still to come, bringing in their train the golden age of the human race.

¹ Cf. Isa. xi. 6 ffg.

² Ibid., xi. 12.

CHAPTER IX

JESUS OF NAZARETH

“ And one of the Scribes came and asked him, what commandment is the first of all? Jesus answered, The first is: Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one: and thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul and with all thy mind and with all thy strength (Deut. vi. 4, 5). The second is this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself (Lev. xix. 18, 34). There is none other commandment greater than these. And the Scribe said to him: Of a truth, Master, thou hast well said that He is one; and there is none other but He: and to love Him with all the heart and with all the understanding, and with all the strength, and to love his neighbour as himself, is much more than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices. And when Jesus saw that he answered discreetly, he said unto him, Thou art not far from the Kingdom of God.”—*Mark* xii. 28–34.

ABOUT nineteen centuries ago there appeared in an obscure corner of the Roman Empire a Jew, who, like many others of his nation at that time, proclaimed that the new era foretold by their prophets was at hand. He secured a following, with which he moved from place to place, but on endeavouring to bring his claim to be the promised deliverer of his people to the test in their capital itself, he fell a victim to the turbulence of the times. He was charged with sedition against the Roman authorities, and dealt with in the summary manner usual in similar cases. With the brutal contempt inherent in the Roman governors and soldiery towards all con-

quered races, whose "barbarous" views and customs they did not care to understand, and with a malicious mockery at the expense of the people of the country, there was placed an inscription over the cross on which the Jewish popular leader was crucified: "Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews."

This tragedy has become a source of inspiration to untold human souls, to whom the death of Jesus has been transformed into a symbol of their immortality. Jesus is now acclaimed by vast masses of the most civilized and progressive of our fellow-men as having been the incarnation of God on earth. His figure stands out like a beacon in whose light they seek security and comfort. The charm of his personality has sent its rays all over the world, and infused countless human hearts with the spirit of love and self-sacrifice. His message comes to them often like an elemental force, proclaiming his ringing admonition: "What does it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul?" yet imbued with an exceptional touch of tenderness for the "publican and sinner," and full of promise to those who believe in his power to save them from sin and evil.

It is one of the most extraordinary paradoxes of history that, in spite of this fact, the Jews, the kinsmen of Jesus, have to this day remained the most consciously determined opponents of his supremacy. Yet the roots of the life and thought of Jesus lie entirely in Jewish soil. He was born and bred a Jew, and practically never went beyond the limits of the land of Israel; his relations and immediate disciples were all Jews, as were his sympathisers and enemies. His ideas and teachings were those in vogue among his people, and even where it is

thought that he was not at one with them, he appealed to them on the common ground of the sacred Scriptures. He seems hardly ever to have come in direct personal touch with any one outside Israel, and on one of the very rare occasions when he did so, in the case of the Samaritan woman, he uttered his most profound and significant remark in favour of Judaism: "Ye worship that which ye know not; we worship that which we know: for salvation is from the Jews."¹ Here his genius recognized the radical difference between the religion of the Jews, which is inspired and self-evolved, and that of others, where, as with the Samaritans, it was due to a mere geographical accident, or, as it often happened, to a speculation spread and supported by the vicissitudes of circumstances.²

In what then does the Jewish opposition to the authority of Jesus consist? The Christian explanation is that the Jews will not see the truth. This is the despairing cry of all who, from Paul downwards, have failed to convince the Jews, and it has assumed in varying ways and degrees the forms of persecution or rhetoric, which have been tempered by the flattering hope that the eyes of the Jews will one day be opened. Yet this does not seem, after all, a very convincing and triumphant way of solving the perplexing problem, and it is perhaps

¹ John iv. 22. His attitude towards the Canaanitish woman was inspired by a mixture of hostility and repugnance. Cf. Matt. xv. 21-28; Mark vii. 24-30.

² His announcement of the ultimate universality of the faith which was to proceed from the Jews had been long ago anticipated by the higher conception of a Jewish prophet that every manifestation of divine worship, under whatever form it may be, was in reality an adoration of the Creator of the universe and the Father of all mankind. Cf. Mal. i. 11.

just this circumstance which increases the violence of Christian controversy against the Jews. There is not even recognized the undoubted fact that the Christians themselves have never been able to agree on the words of Jesus, either through misunderstanding or sheer perversity of mind. What, for instance, can be more sacred to the Christian soul than the Lord's Supper? Yet to what atrocities and bloodshed has this not given rise? We are told by a distinguished Anglican theologian: "The 'transubstantiation' and 'sacramental' controversies which have raged for centuries round the Feast of Communion and Christian love are as heart-saddening as they are strange and needless. They would never have arisen if it had been sufficiently observed that it was characteristic of Christ's teachings to adopt the language of picture and of emotion. But to turn metaphor into fact, poetry into prose, rhetoric into logic, parable into systematic theology, is at once fatal and absurd."¹ We are not concerned here with the extent to which this system has been adopted in the Christian interpretation of the Jewish Scriptures, or with the fact that this error lies at the root of all Christian dogma, certainly not with the rebuke thus administered to the other Christian denominations differing from the particular views held on the subject by the writer quoted, but, having the main point in mind, it is interesting to see how utterly the Jews are condemned when it was they who did not understand Jesus. He had told them: "Except ye eat the flesh of the son of man and drink his blood, ye have not life in yourselves. He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood hath

¹ F. W. Farrar, *Life of Christ*, 23rd edition, ii. p. 292, note 2.

eternal life.”¹ It is admitted on the authority of the evangelist that “some even of the disciples found the saying harsh and repulsive.”² But when the Jews did not grasp the meaning of Jesus’ words, then we are told: “Thus they were carnally-minded, and to be carnally-minded is death. They did not seek the truth, and it was more and more taken from them. They had nothing, and therefore from them was taken even what they had.”³

Surely, the Jewish people, so true to the faith that is in them, and, withal, so thoughtful and adaptable, cannot have remained deaf to the expressed Will of God in their own Scriptures, and so utterly unapproachable by the dictates of reason.

The argument of the Jews against the claim of Jesus is now practically the same as the objection with which certain of his contemporary opponents replied to him: “For a good work we stone thee not, but for blasphemy and because that thou, being a man, makest thyself God.”⁴ It is the Jewish view that Jesus added no important original element to the religious and moral assets which had been accumulated by the Jewish prophets and sages, and that he has certainly been the more or less direct cause of lowering the pure and lofty ideas about God and man current in Judaism. Nothing could more offend the inner springs of the noblest Jewish susceptibilities than the fundamental Christian belief that Jesus Christ is God himself, the Lord and Saviour of mankind. It is not hardness of heart nor blindness of pride which has prevented the Jews from recognizing Jesus of Nazareth in this light, but, as the

¹ John vi. 53, 54.

³ Ibid., i. p. 415.

² Farrar, *ibid.*, i. p. 418.

⁴ John x. 33.

standard-bearers of the highest form of ethical Monotheism, they cannot believe that the Almighty was born of woman, lived for about thirty years as an ordinary mortal, and then died ; convinced of the righteousness and mercy of God, they cannot admit that there is any other Saviour but He Himself. Those who do not know, or cannot understand, the intense feeling of the Jews on these questions and the impassable chasm between the Jewish and the Christian standpoints, will do well to ponder over the following quotations, which serve to bring out this contrast :—

I, even I, am the Lord ; and
beside Me there is no
Saviour.¹

O Israel, hope in the Lord ;
For with the Lord there is
mercy,
And with Him is plenteous
redemption,
And He shall redeem Israel
from all his iniquities.²

Joseph, thou son of David, fear
not to take unto thee Mary
thy wife ; for that which is
conceived in her is of the
Holy Ghost.³ And she shall
bring forth a son ; and
thou shalt call his name
Jesus, for it is he that shall
save his people from their
sins.⁴

It is not a mere sympathetic appreciation of the greatness of Jesus which can bridge over such a gulf. In view of the fact that he is regarded as God Himself, Jesus Christ is to the Christian beyond any comparison whatever, and the language employed about him is, therefore, pitched in the highest possible key. F. W. Farrar, whose *Life of Christ* may be taken as expressing the cultured orthodox standpoint of English Christianity, provides us with an example of the characteristic style in which the admiration of the believer exalts the

¹ Isa. xliii. 11.

² Ps. cxxx. 7, 8.

³ i.e., God Himself, or the third person of the Trinitarian Deity.

⁴ Matt. i. 20, 21.

character of Jesus. If we take, for instance, the reflection, which might legitimately trouble the Christian mind, that Jesus, who was God incarnate, whose every word should have been treasured up as a precious inheritance to mankind, spent all his life, with the exception of an exceedingly short period, in a useless retirement from the world, the Christian might well think that if a mere glimpse of Jesus gives us so much, how much more would have been the sight of all his glory! Yet Farrar is not merely satisfied to note this fact, but he actually breaks out in pæans of boundless gratitude in contemplating the moral to be derived from this effacement of Jesus. He wishes us to believe that it was all an arrangement of eternal wisdom, of which he speaks in such exaggerated language: "That Christ should have passed thirty years of his brief life in the deep obscurity of a provincial village; that he should have been brought up not only in a conquered land, but in its most despised province; not only in a despised province, but in its most disregarded valley, etc." ¹ The silence of the evangelists on what happened to Jesus from his infancy to his ministry more than pleases him: "What eloquence in their silence! May we not find in their very reticence a wisdom and instruction, more profound than if they had filled many volumes of minor details?" ² And in surveying the whole of this total silence on the life of Jesus before his public appearance, a period of which no one knows anything whatsoever, we are told: "They were the years of a sinless childhood, a sinless boyhood, a sinless manhood, spent in that humility, toil, obscurity, submission, contentment, prayer, to make them an eternal example

¹ *Life of Christ*, i. p. 57.

² *Ibid.*, i. p. 56.

to all our race. . . . It was during these years that his life is for us the main example of how we ought to live." ¹

Now, while a prominent Christian divine can thus go into ecstasies, not at what Jesus did or said, but because he did and said nothing, those who have not come under his spell cannot share this beatific feeling simply because for the space of thirty years that Jesus passed on earth he did nothing to heal the sufferings or improve the character and minds of his fellow-men, and that, although conscious of his supernatural powers, which for the first time he manifested by turning water into wine for a festive gathering, he did nothing to save his distracted people or an erring world from material and spiritual ruin. The critic can draw no lesson and pronounce no opinion, except a negative one, on that period of the life of Jesus of which no records exist and of which, therefore, nothing at all is known. Yet it is his duty to examine, as far as is possible, those evidences which relate to the short public life of Jesus and adopt such a standard as is applicable to his case. As he assumed to have given to the world a new covenant in contrast to that of the Jews, their religious teachings must be compared with those which proceeded from him. If before Jesus certain lofty doctrines or ideas existed among the Jews, it would only be just to credit Judaism with their original possession, while the adoption and reiteration by Jesus of such views and maxims cannot be entirely ascribed to him. Christian theologians, and Dean Farrar was among them, like to take great pains and elaborate care to point out the originality of Jesus whenever an opportunity is considered available, but

¹ *Life of Christ*, i. p. 94.

it is nevertheless thought presumptuous by them if this method is continued to its logical conclusion. Dean Farrar's views on the matter are well worth quoting at length, as those of an enlightened Christian ecclesiastic. He says: "Now, I would premise at once that these questions about 'originality' seem to me supremely idle and irrelevant in all cases, but most of all when they are irreverently applied to the teaching of our Lord." ¹ "Hillel was a 'sweet' and 'noble' Rabbi; he is the happiest figure which Rabbinism has produced; he seems to have been really learned, humble, peaceful and enlightened, but the distance between him and Jesus is a distance absolutely immeasurable, and the resemblance of his teaching to that of Jesus is the resemblance of a glow-worm to the sun." ² "Hillel was undoubtedly a great and good man, and he deserved the wail uttered over his grave—'Ah, the gentle, the holy, the scholar of Ezra'—but to compare his teaching with that of the Saviour is absurd." ³ "The shortest and slightest of our Saviour's parables is worth all that he ever said." ⁴ "To compare Rabbinism with Christianity, and Hillel with Christ, requires either a consummate effrontery or a total paralysis of the critical faculty." ⁵

Still, while the innate fairness of the English scholar was not strong enough to suppress the irascible temper of the theologian, Dean Farrar admits that Hillel was "undoubtedly a great and good man." But Hillel was also a contemporary of Jesus; he died when Jesus was only a child. He was the spiritual leader of his people, and his name became among them a house-

¹ *Life of Christ*, Append. "Jesus and Hillel," ii. p. 454.

² *Ibid.*, p. 455. ³ *Ibid.*, pp. 459, 460. ⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 460.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 460, note 2.

hold word for broad-mindedness and saintliness of life. Is it not likely that Jesus, as a student of the Scriptures, should in the ordinary course have been influenced by this eminent master in Israel? Is it really impossible that Hillel's famous reply to a would-be proselyte: "Do not unto others what thou wouldest not that others should do unto thee: this is the whole Law; the rest is only commentary," should have reached Jesus? Or is Jesus to be glorified as the author of the golden rule, even though it was declared before him as the law of life by the highest representative of Judaism at that time? It is surely unjust to maintain that Jesus was the first to proclaim that religion consisted in the love of God and man, while even Christian records show¹ that quite an ordinary Jewish scribe concurred with Jesus on this point. As a matter of fact, the Jewish spiritual authorities had long ago ordained that the pentateuchal passage enjoining the love of God be recited daily, and the Mosaic legislation expressly provided that the neighbour, including the stranger, should be loved as oneself.²

In order to enhance the greatness of Jesus, it is a tacit rule in Christian circles to describe his Jewish surroundings in appallingly dark colours. Even so sober a writer and non-professional theologian as R. H. Hutton, tells us that Jesus "entered into the poorest of lots, among nearly the most degraded generation of the

¹ In Luke x. 25-28, it is the scribe who points this out in reply to a question by Jesus.

² Cf. Deut. vi. 4, 5; Lev. xix. 18, 34. The view that the essence of religion consists in the love of God and of one's fellow-men, as well as the golden rule in its negative form, was to be found in the *Didache*, a Jewish manual of instruction for proselytes in use at the beginning of the Christian era.

most narrow-minded race that the world has ever known." ¹

It is particularly the Scribes and Pharisees who have suffered from this furious indulgence in superlative denunciations whenever they cross the path of Christianity. The fashion was set in the New Testament, and Christian theologians have, with few exceptions, followed it faithfully ever since. But it should be remembered that the authors of the Gospels and Epistles were opponents of the Scribes and Pharisees, and in violent conflict with the religious leaders of the Jewish people. It is, therefore, not fair to take the denunciations of the Scribes and Pharisees in the New Testament at their face value, and it is certainly a very gross injustice to apply those partisan diatribes to all the Scribes and Pharisees. Sometimes, it is true, we would allow our sense of justice to be overridden because only one side of the case is available to us. Thus, for instance, we are obliged to judge the Carthaginians according to the views of their Roman enemies. But, unlike the Carthaginians, the Pharisees have left us very ample records of themselves, while their bodily and spiritual descendants are still living to-day within our very midst, and though the Christian world is naturally saturated with the New Testament opinions concerning them, those who are willing to examine with an unprejudiced mind the other side of the case will have their set views very materially, if not entirely, recast on this subject.

According to the judgment of Jewish history, the Pharisees constituted the best religious element of the Jewish nation, and their leading principle was the

¹ *Theological Essays*, 4th ed., p. 290.

championship of the religious rights of the people as a whole, in opposition to the priestly and aristocratic pretensions of the worldly and materialistic Sadducees. It was the Pharisees who established the synagogues and schools, where prayer superseded sacrifice, and the instruction of the whole people was turned into one of the most sacred duties of the Israelites, and even in the Temple itself, where the Sadducees held sway, the Pharisees instituted daily prayers in addition to the ordained sacrifices. They turned the priest into a mere deputy of the people, and even the power of forgiveness of sin, which the High Priest assumed on the Day of Atonement, was made by the Pharisees to consist in the virtue of genuine repentance of each individual on that day.

It is evident that a party which fights against sacerdotal and oligarchical domination and makes the education of the masses obligatory, could not have been an exclusive and selfish caste, nor could it have won the confidence of the nation to the extent it did. The Pharisees were indeed strict in the observance of the ritual commandments, and, as is almost unavoidable in such cases, their efforts, like those of the Puritans, occasionally drifted into excesses. But to the faithful, this was no hateful burden ; it was only " the yoke of the Kingdom of Heaven " which they took upon themselves daily by the recitation of the Shema : " Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy soul, and with all thy might." Nor, in spite of their theory and practice of Jewish separatism, were they necessarily the enemies of non-Jews. They were not averse to the reception of proselytes, as is shown even by an exaggerated charge against them in the

New Testament ¹ that they traverse sea and land to make one proselyte, and it is significant that they considered it an honour that some of their most eminent masters were descended from non-Jews. The denunciations of the Pharisees in the New Testament have stamped them as pious hypocrites *par excellence*, but, since the Talmud also condemns the hypocrisy of certain Pharisees, the fact that such reproofs are not a standing feature there, is some evidence that this vice was by no means so common, as was asserted by their rivals.²

The free spirit which reigned among the Pharisees is also shown by their introduction of money compensation instead of the *lex talionis*, and by the fact that their penal system was distinguished by such enlightenment that capital punishment was hardly ever resorted to. Finally, in spite of the collisions into which Jesus seems to have come with Pharisees, it should be remembered by Christians that a number of them were also his friends. It has indeed been pointed out by Dean Farrar as a most remarkable fact that the Pharisees had little part in his arrest and condemnation, and that they are not once directly mentioned in any event connected with the arrest, the trial, and the crucifixion of Jesus.³

Opposed to the Pharisees, were the Sadducees, a

¹ Matt. xxiii. 15.

² A Jewish authority, referring to this charge, says: "It is a slanderous misrepresentation of the Pharisees to state that they divorced morality and religion, when everywhere virtue, probity and benevolence are declared by them to be the essence of the Law. Nothing could have been more loathsome to the genuine Pharisee than hypocrisy." "Whatever good a man does he should do it for the glory of God" (Aboth, ii. 13). Cf. *Jew. Encyclopedia*, vol. ix. article "Pharisee."

³ *Life*, ii. p. 332.

section composed of the priesthood, as well as of the aristocratic, rich and Hellenised Jew. The political and religious views of the Sadducees have no living interest to modern Judaism, except as an example to be avoided, while they must have been too worldly to have any sympathy or understanding for the tendencies which led to the establishment of Christianity.

The link between the Pharisees and the Nazarenes (or primitive Christians) were the Essenes, **הסידים**, whose three most prominent virtues were, according to Philo and Josephus, the love of God, the love of goodness and the love of man. The Essenes endeavoured to emulate the Pharisees in the rigour and purity of their lives. Their general benevolence, their state of communism, their objection to marriage, their contemplative mysticism, their eager expectation of the Messiah and their strong reliance on prophecy, are features which make the Essenes closely akin to the followers of Jesus, though some of his teachings, and reasons beyond our knowledge, evidently led him to separate himself from them.

Certainly, John the Baptist, whose preaching had a great effect on the birth of the new spiritual movement, belonged to the Essenes. The appeals he made to his people to be baptized and repent (which was a common practice among the Essenes in their striving for holiness) stirred the imagination of his countrymen. It was at one of those weird scenes which were enacted by John and his followers at the banks of the Jordan that there occurred the fateful moment in the life of Jesus which created a new era in the history of mankind.

The contact of Jesus with John the Baptist gives us the first historical foothold in our knowledge of the life

of Christ. But, it may be asked, what do we know of him at all as historically certain? For there is a distinction between the real Jesus and the Christ of the Gospels; or between the conception formed of him by his first disciples, and the Jesus Christ of the Church.

Of Jesus of Nazareth, as he was in reality, we know no more than we choose to fancy according to the descriptions left of him in his biographies in the New Testament. The orthodox theologian will, after numerous irreconcilable difficulties, piece together a life of Jesus based on the Gospels, but to those Christians who are troubled with critical considerations such an undertaking is practically hopeless. They will either, like D. F. Strauss, end by asking whether they can still, under the, circumstances, call themselves Christians, or, like Renan, they might construct some historical romance on the fascinating subject.

The four Gospels are not biographies of Jesus by men who knew him and were eye-witnesses of what they recorded. These Gospels were composed at different periods, certainly long after the death of Jesus, and one of them is considered by competent authorities to be as late as 100 years after that event. The writers themselves never claim to have been present at the incidents whose history they relate, and nowhere do they assume to be in any way inspired or protected from error. The names of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John given to the Gospels do not show that these men actually composed them, for not only was it customary in Christian circles of that time to ascribe spurious writings to famous men,¹ but it will be observed that

¹ I will only quote the classical testimony of Lecky: "The immense number of forged documents is one of the most dis-

the Gospels are only entitled as "according to Matthew," etc. There is a great uncertainty as to how and by whom the Gospels were compiled, and numerous theories have been put forward, but none of them can claim anything like convincing authority. There seem to have been made a number of attempts at chronicling various sayings and doings of Jesus as the recollection of them was floating about in the primitive Church, and the canonical and apocryphal Gospels are the permanent results. As to the value of the canonical Gospels,¹ it is sufficient to know the method by which at least one of them, that of Luke, came into being. Its introduction runs thus: "Forasmuch as many have taken in hand to draw up a narrative concerning those matters which have been fulfilled among us, even as they delivered them unto us, which from the beginning were eye-witnesses and ministers of the word, it seemed good to me also, having traced the course of all things accurately from the first, to write unto thee in order, most excellent Theophilus, that thou mightest know the certainty concerning the things wherein thou wast instructed."² Now it is clear that what is related in the Gospel of St. Luke is, at best, second- or third-hand evidence only, giving in an improved form the

graceful features of the Church history of the first few centuries." *European Morals*, i. p. 341.

¹ The only test between a "canonical" and an "apocryphal" Gospel was that of agreement with the views of the dominant Church. Anything that differed from these latter was declared apocryphal. It is not absolutely certain who fixed the present canon, but it is said that at the Council of Nice all the books were put together near the holy table, with a prayer that the canonical books might be found above and the apocryphal below. The prayer seems to have had the desired result.

² Luke i. 1-4.

accounts of men of whom we know nothing whatever, nor are we assured in the slightest degree that either the original records or their compilers and redactors were infallible, or even trustworthy beyond suspicion. As regards the latter point, it should be particularly observed that "the Gospel according to St. Luke" was written in order to confirm the faith of one who had only recently entered the fold of the Church, so that we may legitimately presume that everything was done by the author to put his narrative in such a light as to make it serve that ulterior purpose. In like manner the author of the fourth Gospel unconsciously avows his bias by declaring that the book was written to show that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God.¹ The same inherent weakness is also evident throughout the first Gospel, the writer of which has always in mind the object of demonstrating that "all this is come to pass that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet."² It is, therefore, well to remember that we have to deal with partisan records related by men who were most anxious to prove the claims of Jesus as the Messiah and Saviour of the world.

But we have not always even the original Gospels before us. It was the tradition of the Church that the Gospel according to Matthew was written in Hebrew, and after some time translated into Greek. The Hebrew original had been lost, and it is expressly stated by the Church Fathers that no one knows who made the Greek translation which is represented in our present copies. It appears, however, that this Greek version is so unfettered that it does not at all read as if it were a translation from the Hebrew. Considering

¹ John xx. 31. ² Matt. i. 22, etc.

the fact that every word in the Gospels is regarded as of the greatest value, especially in the formation of dogma, such unreliability ought to be duly recognized. But this far-reaching fact is entirely overlooked or evaded. We are told by a notable Christian theologian in regard to it: "This is merely a proof of its excellence. It bears the mark of an original. The author was so fully competent of his task as to produce a version having all the appearance and character of an original. The translation is free. The unknown individual appears not to have adhered slavishly or literally to the document before him. He cast it into the mould of another language, retaining the spirit and force of the original. Had it been a literal translation, it is almost impossible to conceive of the want of some marks, at least, of a version. If it faithfully adhered to the letter of the original, there would have been indications of a translation. But the author not only exercised his own mind on two languages, but also on the entire substance and contents of the Hebrew Gospel. In this way he may be said to have been to some extent an independent author, as well as translator. Still, however, he was under infallible guidance. He could not err. He had nothing to correct, nothing to alter essentially. The Gospel passing through his hands was always Matthew's Gospel." ¹

It is impossible to follow the logic of this reasoning. For even if we had the original Gospel in Hebrew, and had been satisfied that it was written by the apostle Matthew himself, we need not necessarily believe in his inspiration, but what faintest guarantee is there

¹ Dr. Samuel Davidson, *Introduction to the New Testament*, i. p. 52.

that his Greek translator, who, admittedly, not only felt himself free to deal with the substance of the Gospel but of whom we do not know in any way, whether by name or as to his fitness and character, was under infallible guidance and could not err ?

It is this freedom of translation and adaptation of previously existing material which renders the Gospels untrustworthy, and our hesitation to take them as reliable records is justified by the eager readiness with which Christians have ever been willing to accept them as beyond suspicion. Having regard to the dispute of the early Christians and to the objection of the Jews and Jewish Christians to admit the divinity of Jesus, the temptations of the compilers of the Gospels were particularly great. We have only to consider what would be the result if a Roman Catholic or a Protestant had it in his power to adapt the Gospels in accordance to his own dogmatic notions. In spite of the venerable and learned Vulgate translation of the Bible by the Roman Church, it is not accepted as authoritative by the Protestants, while members of the Latin Communion are actually forbidden the use of the exceedingly careful Protestant versions. How much more is it necessary to be on our guard when a free translation and revision has been made in the most critical period of the development of the Church, when the system of pious frauds flourished luxuriantly, and by people of whose names and qualifications we have not the slightest knowledge ? Not the least part of our care should be devoted to the manner in which the relations of Jesus to his people are presented to us. There are numerous instances in which the malevolence of the author may be detected in the turn which is

given to certain incidents telling against the Jews. It is particularly so in the Gospel according to John, where, in addition to the pronounced ignorance of local colour and Jewish life, there is a bitter attitude towards "the Jews," as they are pointedly termed, reminding one of the time when the name was turned by Christians into an opprobrious epithet. In the fourth Gospel Jesus assumes an unnaturally detached point of view, and refers to the Scriptures as "your" and "their" Law, in the same way as the writer repeatedly speaks of "the Jews' feast." And in view of the account of the crucifixion given in that Gospel, it is essential to remember the habitual manner in which he states that "for this purpose did the Jews persecute Jesus" and "the Jews sought to kill him."¹ In one instance we are told that Jesus stayed in Galilee, and would not go to Judea "because the Jews sought to kill him." But when the feast of Tabernacles was at hand, his disciples urged him to go to Jerusalem, and he would not. Nevertheless, when his friends had departed for the feast, he also went there secretly, and found that he had been asked for, and that there was a great deal of discussion for and against him. "And there was much murmuring among the multitudes concerning him: some said, he is a good man; others said, Not so, but he leadeth the multitude astray. However, no man spake openly of him for fear of the Jews."² The author forgot that the "multitudes" in Jerusalem who were both for and against Jesus were, of course, Jewish, but he wanted to show that no one dared to speak openly about Jesus "for fear of the

¹ John v. 16, 18; vii. 19, 25; viii. 37, 40.

² Ibid., vii. 1-3, 13.

Jews." The same sinister purpose is also evident when we are told that the Jewish disciples said to Jesus, himself a Jew, living in the country of the Jews : " Rabbi, the Jews were but now seeking to stone thee." ¹

It is on the most important points touching Christian belief that the Gospels fail us entirely. The virgin-birth and divinity of Jesus, his resurrection and ascension, are related to us on such unsatisfactory evidence that it is only a credulously inclined mind, or faith inculcated in childhood, that can make the narratives of those events appear to the Christian as at all acceptable.

On what basis does the proof of the virgin-birth of Jesus rest ? On a very doubtful dream and the conflicting testimonies of still more doubtful angels. We are told that when Joseph found that his betrothed was with child, he intended to put her away, but an angel came to him and said that he need have no fear, as she was with child from the Holy Ghost. It is only in the Gospel of Matthew where this dream is related, there being no reference to it anywhere else. Luke tells us, on the other hand, that it was to Mary that the angel Gabriel came announcing to her that she would bring forth a child which should be called the Son of the Most High. It is Luke, also, who alone relates that when Jesus was born in Bethlehem, an angel came to shepherds in the neighbourhood and told them of the great event which had just happened, and with the angel there was a multitude of the heavenly host. Matthew, however, says that wise men from the East, led by a star, came to Jerusalem, asking : " Where is he that is born King of the Jews ? " so that they might worship him, and that the star ultimately

¹ John xi. 8.

stopped over the house where Jesus was born. Herod, having been much troubled at the reported birth of the "King of the Jews," tried to kill the infant, so God warned the wise men of the East not to return to Herod, and "an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream" telling him to escape to Egypt. "But when Herod was dead, behold an angel of the Lord appeareth in a dream to Joseph in Egypt" bidding him to return home. Joseph, however, on arriving in Judea, was still afraid of Herod's son, Archelaus, so he was again warned in a dream; he ultimately withdrew to Galilee, "and came and dwelt in a city called Nazareth: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophets, that he should be called a Nazarene."¹

Although the story is naturally well known, it deserves repetition at length, in order to bring home its purely mythical character. In the first place, we have seen that we do not know who wrote the original Hebrew Gospel according to Matthew, nor who translated it into the present Greek "original," and also that Luke obtained his information from sources which we have no possibility of tracing or testing. Of Mary we know very little and of Joseph nothing whatever. Matthew speaks of a dream which came to Joseph; Luke only knows of a dream to Mary; the other two Gospels confirm neither. The stories about "the wise men from the East," the star which led them and stood still over a particular house, as well as of the shepherds who worshipped the newly born babe, have not even the colour of probability about them, while throughout the narratives of Matthew and Luke, who agree in none of the particulars they give, the whole moving

¹ Cf. Matt. and Luke, chaps. i. and ii.

power is furnished by angels and dreams, the most shadowy of unrealities.¹

Are these, the only records we have of the supernatural birth of Jesus, sufficient evidence to establish it for us? Strangely enough, while relating all the wonders that happened to Jesus and his family, Luke says that when, at the presentation in the Temple, one Simeon broke out into thanksgiving at seeing the child Jesus, "his father and mother were marvelling at the things which were spoken concerning him";² also, that when Jesus, at the age of twelve, had been found in the Temple by his parents, and his mother asked him why he had so behaved, saying: "Behold, thy father and I sought thee sorrowing," and he replied: "How is it that ye sought me? wist ye not that I must be in my Father's house?" it is added that "they understood not the saying which he spake unto them."³ It is not likely that these stories have anything historical in them, but it may be taken that the pronounced want of belief of the mother and brothers of Jesus in his mission when he commenced his public career was a notorious, though unpleasant, fact, a point on which the three synoptical evangelists are in accord. His family were against him and asserted that "he is beside himself,"⁴ while he, on his part, seemed to have broken with them.⁵ If the divine origin and life of Jesus had been known to his parents, it is impossible to conceive such a development.

We are met with equal difficulties when we come

¹ The reference to the angel Gabriel is sufficient in itself to stamp these stories as fictitious.

² Luke ii. 33.

³ Luke ii. 48-50.

⁴ Mark iii. 21.

⁵ Matt. xii. 46 ffg.; Mark iii. 31 ffg.; Luke viii. 19 ffg.

to consider the evidences on which the stories of the resurrection and ascension are based. The fact that the records concerning the resurrection do not contain the childish mythology which we have observed in the case of the nativity, is one of the reasons why greater stress is laid on the evidences at our disposal. The famous declaration of Paul that if the resurrection be not true the whole Christian faith is nought,¹ seems to inspire Christian believers with daring and desperate courage. R. H. Hutton paraphrases Paul by saying: "If any one could prove the charge that we believe it on evidence on which we should refuse to accept any other fact not affecting our spiritual hopes at all, he would, I think, make out his case that our Christian faith rests on no secure grounds. Evidence which is not good enough to prove ordinary events, can hardly be offered in good faith in proof of extraordinary events."²

Now, it is an unquestionable fact that the resurrection represents an event absolutely beyond our experience, and, if it really took place, it was contrary to all laws of nature. Indeed, it is just this which can alone constitute the significance ascribed to it, and not only are we called upon to believe it as a fundamental truth, but we are also told that the evidence in support of it is overwhelmingly convincing.

Various unsuccessful efforts have been made by some rationalist critics to take the story of the resurrection out of the realm of the miraculous. It is certainly a thankless task to try to please all parties, nor is the suggestion that Jesus was taken off the cross alive,

¹ 1 Cor. xv. 14 fig.

² *Theological Essays*, p. 130.

based on Pilate's surprise at the rapid end of Jesus, at all likely. After all, little faith was required by the primitive Christians to believe in the resurrection of their master, who had been so ignominiously done to death, and had thereby shattered all their visions of the Kingdom of Heaven, which, they were told, had come with Jesus as the promised Messiah. The idea of life after death is so much based on our ineradicable belief in the immanent justice in the government of the world that the disciples of Jesus could easily be persuaded, or persuade themselves, that his death was not his end, and we thus hear of his resurrection, and then of his ascension to heaven, where he "sat down at the right hand of God."¹ But, above all, it should be remembered that to the believers the resurrection was not a stumblingblock,² for did not the ancient Scriptures and the wonderful deeds of Jesus prove that dead people can rise to life again, just as subsequently many holy men of Christendom performed the same manner of miracle ?³

The records of the resurrection of Jesus contained in the Gospels show that the writers heard of the event more as of a current rumour turned into a tradition than as an actual occurrence of which they knew the real facts. All the four contradict each other in the most important details concerning what happened, and where we should hardly believe a miracle even if it came

¹ Mark xvi. 19.

² Cf. also Matt. xiv. 1, 2.

³ The Church has altogether been strongly inclined to a belief in miracles. St. Augustine, the ablest of the Fathers, says that in his own diocese alone so many miracles had occurred that it would require volumes to relate them all, and among them no less than five cases of restoration of life to the dead. Cf. Lecky, *Rationalism*, i. p. 163.

from a probably reliable source, we are left helplessly groping about among four irreconcilable narratives.

Matthew, with his irrepressible desire to prove all things from the Scriptures, tells us that "the chief priests and the Pharisees" went together to Pilate on the day following the burial of Jesus to ask that proper precautions be taken, lest his disciples, remembering his promise that after three days he would rise again, should steal his body away and say that he had risen from the dead. To this Pilate replied that they could make the grave as sure as they liked, and they then went and sealed the stone and placed a guard over the tomb.¹ All the Gospels, however, agree that the disciples were completely taken by surprise, "for as yet they knew not the Scripture that he must rise again from the dead."² Since it is not at all likely that the enemies of Jesus should have understood him better, and thought of his prediction with greater interest and faith, than his disciples, the whole story is merely an indication of the efforts that were made by the evangelist to bolster up his tale by turning "the chief priests and the Pharisees" into unwilling witnesses to the truth. This is further shown by his subsequent story that when some of the guard came into the city and told the "chief priests" what had happened, the latter met "the elders," and after deliberation, "they gave large money unto the soldiers, saying, Say ye, his disciples came by night and stole him away while we slept. And if this come to the Governor's ears, we will persuade him and rid you of care. So they took the money and did as they were taught: and this saying was spread abroad among the Jews and continueth

¹ Matt. xxvii. 62-66.

² John xx. 9.

until this day.”¹ It has to be pointed out that “the chief priests and the Pharisees” could not have carried out this business on the Sabbath day, nor is it necessary to comment on the unquestioning faith of the unbelieving Jews in the resurrection of Jesus and on their wickedness in bribing the soldiers set to watch the tomb, who were to say that “his disciples came by night and stole him away while we slept.” That such a version should have been current among the Jews at the time the Gospel was written, shows that they, like the Christians, had so little difficulty in believing in the possibility of the resurrection of a dead body, that it was thought worth while to find some reason for the event alleged to have taken place, just as the Christians did not deny that their pagan opponents could, and did, perform miracles, only that they were the work of demons.

Matthew tells us further that at the dawn of the first day of the week there came Mary Magdalene and the other Mary to see the sepulchre; Mark adds to them the name of Salome; Luke speaks of “the women which had come with him out of Galilee,” and he then says that there were among them Mary Magdalene, Joanna and Mary, the mother of James; but John maintains that only Mary Magdalene came to the grave. It is needless to point out the importance of such irreconcilable evidence as to who it was who are alleged to have found the grave of Jesus empty, and our difficulties are increased by the conflicting accounts of what they are supposed to have seen. In Matthew it is said that on the arrival of the women there took place a great earthquake, on which an angel descended

¹ Matt. xxviii. 11-15.

from heaven and rolled away the stone. The guard "became as dead men," but to the women the angel said that Jesus had risen from the dead and that he had gone before them into Galilee, where they would see him. On going to the disciples to tell them the news, the women met Jesus, who said that his disciples should go to Galilee, where they would meet him. "But the eleven disciples went into Galilee, unto the mountain where Jesus had appointed them. And when they saw him, they worshipped him: but some doubted." The remarkable vagueness of the description of the meeting place and the fact that, in spite of all, some of the apostles are still said to have doubted, are particularly worthy of note.

In Mark, the women, on arriving at the tomb and asking themselves how the stone from the door could be rolled away, "for it was exceedingly great," suddenly saw that the stone was removed. In the sepulchre they saw a young man, who gave them the information that Jesus would meet his disciples in Galilee. But the women were so afraid that "they said nothing to any one." Jesus then appeared first to Mary Magdalene, and when she told the disciples of what had occurred, they disbelieved her. Then Jesus "was manifested in another form unto two of them, and when these told their friends, they also found no belief." "And afterward he was manifested unto the eleven themselves as they sat at meat; and he upbraided them with their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they believed not them which had seen him after he was risen."

Luke agrees with neither of the foregoing mutually contradictory accounts. The women, we are told by

him, found the stone already removed from the tomb, and on entering it they did not find the body of Jesus. While they were perplexed at this discovery, "behold, two men stood by them in dazzling apparel," who told them that Jesus had risen, as he had predicted. The women returned and told this "to the eleven and all the rest," but it was looked upon as "idle talk." Peter, however, went to see for himself, and, only finding the linen cloth, went home wondering at what had happened. Later on Jesus appeared to two of the disciples, who did not recognize him at first, and when he had explained to them what was to have happened to the Christ, according to the Scriptures, they asked him to stay with them. They then sat down to eat, and when he had blessed the bread and given it to them, they found who he was, but "he vanished out of their sight." The two disciples returned to their companions, and, as they were discussing the mysterious resurrection of Jesus, he "himself stood in the midst of them." They were, however, so terrified by his appearance, that he told them to feel him, that they might believe that he was no ghost, and he also asked them for something to eat. They gave him a piece of broiled fish, which he ate in their sight.

Finally, the narrative of the Gospel according to John differs from the preceding three. It is related there that Mary Magdalene, on arriving at the tomb and finding it empty, communicated the news to Peter and "the other disciple," who both went to see the grave. While Mary stood weeping outside the sepulchre, she saw two angels sitting in the tomb, who inquired of her the cause of her sadness. On her replying, she turned round and beheld Jesus standing, but she did

not recognize him, thinking him to be the gardener. He also asked her why she cried, and, calling her by her name, she knew who it was. Jesus, however, said to her: "Touch me not, for I am not yet ascended unto the Father," and then bade her go and tell his disciples of his impending ascension. On the same day, when the doors were shut where the disciples were, "for fear of the Jews," Jesus appeared among his followers, and he also came to them eight days afterwards, "the doors being shut." "After these things" Jesus manifested himself again to the disciples at the Sea of Tiberias, where they were fishing, and they all had a meal together.¹

Such, in substance, are the different and differing accounts which we possess of the resurrection of Jesus. There is such an undeniable contradiction between the various writings, as regards persons, places and events, that no reliance can be put on the accuracy of what they relate. The Gospels, as we now have them, were composed long after the death of the apostles, when the tradition of the resurrection had become one of the remarkable incidents in the life of the Son of God. From the significant concurrence of the evangelists, it would seem that the origin of the story came from Mary Magdalene, that weird figure among the followers of Jesus, who had been cured by him of a mental affliction by having "seven devils" cast out of her. Considering the nervous tension created in her excited mind by the death of Jesus, and her devoted attention to

¹ It is then said in the fourth Gospel that this was the third time that Jesus had manifested himself to the disciples; nothing is here known of his appearance to the two disciples, related by Mark and Luke.

his grave after his burial, it is possible that she may have imagined that she had seen angels, and even Jesus himself. The other particulars of the story, which do not agree, were constructed for the purpose of giving the alleged resurrection of Jesus a circumstantial background.

What we are told of the concluding intercourse of Jesus with his disciples bears the stamp of ecclesiastical dogma about it,¹ or is contained in the following naïvely vague and exaggerated summary: "And there are also many other things which Jesus did, the which if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself would not contain the books that should be written."²

The Acts of the Apostles relate that Jesus remained forty days with the disciples,³ and that "he charged them not to depart from Jerusalem." Luke also says that he told them to wait there,⁴ but, according to Mark, they were commanded to go to Galilee.⁵ Matthew has it that they went to Galilee, "unto the mountain where Jesus had appointed them,"⁶ but John, contrary to all the others, takes Jesus into both regions.⁷ There is practically nothing left to us from which we might learn what transpired during that precious time which Jesus then passed among his disciples. We can draw our own conclusions. For there was really no object in this re-appearance on earth, just as no purpose was served by the resurrection. True, much eloquence

¹ The reference to baptism in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost betokens a late period in the history of the primitive Church.

² John xxi. 25.

³ i. 3.

⁴ xxiv. 49.

⁵ xvi. 7.

⁶ xxviii. 16.

⁷ xx. 19, 26; xxi. 1.

has been expended on the lesson to be derived from that miracle, which is assumed to have demonstrated the immortality of the human soul. But the resurrection of Jesus, like his virgin-birth, can only affect the person of the Son of God, to whose privileged position we are not able to lay any claim. The resurrection lost all its convincing and demonstrative value by his having appeared only to the intimate circle of the apostles, whereas it was before his enemies, before all the world, that he should have shown himself if the required impression was to have been made. His disciples required no proof of the possibility of resurrection, for we are told that when Jesus had died there was an earthquake, "and the tombs were opened, and many bodies of the saints that had fallen asleep were raised; and coming forth out of the tombs after his resurrection they entered into the holy city and appeared unto many."¹ Now, this occurrence is as well authenticated as the resurrection of Jesus, and we are told that those who guarded Jesus on the cross were witnesses of that event. Yet what importance are we to attach to this story? and do Christians of to-day really believe that many dead people rose from their graves on Friday, remaining alive, we know not where, up till Sunday, when they entered Jerusalem, where they "appeared unto many," and then presumably went back to their graves? What was the value and object of these wholesale resurrections, or, indeed, of the resurrection of Jesus himself?

But once come back bodily from the dead, it was a question for the evangelists how Jesus finally quitted this earth. Hence the story of the ascension. The

¹ Matt. xxvii. 51-53.

accounts of this are so bald that we can easily appraise at its true value the evidence supporting it. Mark says: "So then the Lord Jesus, after he had spoken unto them, was received up into heaven, and sat down at the right hand of God."¹ According to Luke, while Jesus was blessing his disciples, "he parted from them and was carried up into heaven."² Matthew and John contain no reference to the event at all. The Acts of the Apostles tells us that, as Jesus was speaking to his disciples, "he was taken up and a cloud received him out of their sight." And as they were looking at the sky, "two men stood by them in white apparel," and said: "This Jesus which was received up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye beheld him going into heaven."³

The story of the ascension indicates the character of the narratives of the other superhuman occurrences in the life of Jesus. Can we *truly* believe that Jesus went up *bodily* into "heaven," or "sat down at the right hand of God"? The writer of the Acts brings in two men "in white apparel," meaning thereby the conventional angels, who always seemed to have been ready at hand, and then conveniently vanished. The promise that Jesus would come down to earth in the same manner as he went up to heaven was indeed the very firm belief of the primitive Christians, but we know that their faith did not prove true, and that to all intents and purposes Christendom has even been obliged to abandon all hope of any such occurrence in the future.

There is one feature in the life of Jesus which seems to be considered of paramount importance to many Christians, though their number is rapidly diminishing.

¹ xvi. 19.

² xxiv. 50, 51.

³ i. 10, 11.

It is the miracles which Jesus is supposed to have performed, and which are taken to prove his claims, or those assumed for him by his disciples and the Church. The evidences in regard to the miraculous deeds of Jesus, such as his supernatural birth, resurrection and ascension, suffer very materially by being wholly based on the partial evidences of the evangelical writers. We may apply to all this what has been said about the many miracles performed by the monks of Egypt to substantiate the truth of their faith: "Right, but what proves the truth of those miracles?"¹ Miracles are the common and commonplace property of all historic religions, and some of them, like the Catholic Churches, still presume to possess it at the present day, though they characteristically dispute with each other the monopoly of supernatural power. The wonder-working images, icons, relics, wells, etc., exist even now all over Europe, and attract innumerable believers; yet who, outside the communions immediately concerned, would be led to accept the testimony of the many living beneficiaries as evidence of the actuality of the reputed miracles, or of the truth of the creeds under whose auspices they take place? The miracles attributed to Jesus are not by any means beyond the ordinary range of similar acts of other wonder-working prophets and teachers. The casting out of devils was one of the most frequent thaumaturgic deeds of mercy from which Jesus seems to have derived a particular satisfaction,² but this power he also conferred on his disciples (though the art seems to have been lost) and it appears that even some who were not his followers

¹ Jortin, quoted by Gibbon, *Roman Empire*, iii, 88 (note).

² "Behold, I am casting out devils" (Luke xiii. 32).

were also acknowledged by the New Testament writers to have performed this exorcism.¹ On the Jews, no miracles performed by Jesus could have had the slightest claim to recognition if he diverted them in any way from the accepted form of Theism. There is a declaration by Moses which sets out categorically that if a prophet should arise whose predicted signs and wonders should come to pass, but who should entice the Israelites to serve strange gods, they should withstand him, and he was even to be put to death as the evil genius of his people.²

It is conceded by those who have utilized the accumulated results of New Testament criticism that there is no acceptable basis for the Christian dogma of the Incarnation, and that the Christian idea of a Logos and of a Trinitarian Deity can be easily traced to pre-Christian Jewish and heathen philosophical conceptions which were grafted on to the Monotheism of the Jews. It is recognized that, after all, the words of Jesus himself do not bear out the interpretation which his later disciples gave them. The recorded claim of Jesus to being one with God is more than suspected to be endeavours by them to bolster up their attitude by attributing to him declarations which he had never uttered. It is particularly the Gospel according to John which makes Jesus speak entirely unlike the way he does in the other Gospels, and this is explained by the fact that the Gospel of John was composed at a date when the idea of the divine nature of Jesus had already taken firm root in Christian circles. On the other hand, there are various passages which completely

¹ Mark ix. 38 ; also Acts xix. 13 ff.

² Deut. xiii. 1-5.

do away with the claim that he had given himself out to be equal with God. A Christian scholar, who did not deceive himself as to the difficulties of orthodoxy, has well put it: "When maintaining the Athanasian doctrine of the Trinity, we do not readily recall the verse, 'of that hour knoweth no man, not the angels of God, *neither the Son*, but the Father.'" ¹ A frequent New Testament expression is that there is one God, the Father, and that there is "one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus," ² and in the so-called Lord's Prayer, which Jesus taught his disciples, he did not even enjoin them to mention his name—an indisputable proof that Jesus, as a Jewish monotheist, thought it sufficient to call upon God without any reference to a mediator. There are numerous evidences that Jesus considered himself, or was considered, at least distinctly inferior to God. When he was addressed by one as "good Master," Jesus replied: "Why callest thou me good? There is none good but One, that is God." ³ "The Father is greater than I." ⁴ "Ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's." ⁵ "The head of Christ is God." ⁶ "I do nothing of myself." ⁷ "I have not spoken of myself; but the Father which sent me, He gave me a commandment what I should say." ⁸ The Son can do nothing of himself." ⁹ "I can of mine own self do nothing." ¹⁰ "Then cometh the end, when he shall deliver up the kingdom to God, even the Father." ¹¹ "And when all things have been subjected unto Him,

¹ Mark xiii. 32. Benjamin Jowett, in *Essays and Reviews*, p. 366.

² 1 Tim. ii. 5.

³ Mark x. 17, 18.

⁴ John xiv. 28.

⁵ 1 Cor. iii. 23.

⁶ 1 Cor. xi. 3.

⁷ John viii. 28.

⁸ *Ibid.*, xii. 49; also *ibid.*, xvii. 7, 8.

⁹ John v. 19.

¹⁰ *Ibid.* v. 30.

¹¹ 1 Cor. xv. 24.

then shall the Son also himself be subjected to Him that did subject all things unto Him, that God may be all in all.”¹

There is abundant and unequivocal indication in the language of the New Testament that Jesus was regarded by his contemporary adherents as a man chosen by God, and that even where he was acclaimed as a higher being, he was considered by them as inferior to God. We are told that “God so loved the world that He *gave* His only begotten son,”² and there is a reference to “Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God unto you.”³ Jesus himself spoke to his disciples of “My Father and your Father, and my God and your God,”⁴ and at the close of his earthly career, in the most solemn moment of his life, he broke out in the cry: “My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?”⁵

Those who have perforce turned their backs on traditional Christianity, admit that, like the Incarnation, the supernatural power of Jesus, his miracles, resurrection and ascension are neither supported by experience and reason, nor by any unimpeachable written records. The death of Jesus, as an atonement for the sins of the world by means of his blood, is found to be utterly repugnant to our moral sense. That one god should have died an ignominious death to appease the implacable fury of another god, can only be reconciled by unworthy conceptions of the Divinity entertained by polytheists, and it is indefensible to assume that, on the one hand, God charged all the descendants of Adam with a sin committed by him, while the death of the Son of God was imputed as a set-off against

¹ 1 Cor. xv. 28.

² John iii. 16.

³ Acts ii. 22.

⁴ John xx. 17.

⁵ Matt. xxvii. 46.

that act and all its consequences—all the factors in the plot having no apparent connexion with each other.

The history of comparative religion shows that the life and sayings of Jesus are but the echoes of other religious and ethical teachers before him, and the legends surrounding him the reflex of mythologies current long before his appearance. The idea of a god who was born of a virgin and suffered death to save mankind, if utterly alien to the Hebrew idea of the Almighty, was yet very familiar to the heathen of old.¹ The stories about Osiris, Adonis, Dionysius, Mithras and other saviours of men are strikingly similar in this respect to those of Jesus.

While the Churches proclaim Jesus as the incarnation of God Himself, there are individual Christians who base their allegiance to him as Lord and Saviour on the ground of his unapproachable moral grandeur. There is indeed a Church, the most enlightened, if numerically one of the smallest, in Christendom, which places Jesus above all the great teachers of humanity, not because he was God Himself, which would make his example of no effective avail to mortals, but because he was a man who in a unique way lived a divine life, and in whom the noblest aspirations of our kind have found their highest and most adequate expression. This

¹ Dean Milman says : “ The Incarnation of the Deity, or the union of some part of the Divine Essence with a material or human body, is by no means an uncommon religious notion, more particularly in the East ” (*Hist. of Christianity*, i, 92). He also cites a tradition known in the West at an early period, and quoted by Jerome, that Buddha was born of a virgin (*Ibid.*, i, 94, note 2).

Unitarian view of Jesus of Nazareth, though it denies his divinity and the faith of the Church in him, has much to commend itself to Christians, to whom he is part of their spiritual being. They cannot escape his influence, even if they would, and those who seek salvation out of its reach have to turn into rebels against his authority. Hence the determined efforts to protect his undisputed sway, and the earnest desire to range oneself under his name, though nothing specifically Christian can be retained in the inevitable dissolution to which criticism has reduced the recorded sayings and doings of Jesus.

It is, however, too frequently overlooked by all schools of Christian thought that *in the moral sphere Jesus stands on Jewish ground*. The attempts that are made to disprove this invariably begin and end in an attack on Jewish morals. But the early Christians, according to the evidence of the Acts and Epistles, were by no means so immaculate that we can regard Christianity as a revolt by them against the morality of Judaism, and at least the Jewish Essenes lived a life which was more Christian than that of most of the professed followers of Christ. The mistake arises largely from comparing Christian theory with perverse Jewish practice from the time of Moses, as if Christian theory ever expected to be judged according to Christian practice. Though it is almost an axiom among Christian theologians that the morality taught by Jesus must be superior (if not absolutely incomparable) to that of the Jewish prophets and sages, there are not wanting admissions from most competent Christian quarters that the prevailing view cannot be maintained any longer. But Christian theologians are still too apt in this regard to adopt

an unnecessarily hostile attitude where they think that Jesus has in one particular point risen above the prevailing Jewish view on the subject, as if that were sufficient to disprove the general dependence of Jesus on the religious and ethical conceptions of Judaism. Sometimes this fact, when it cannot be overlooked, is turned against the Jews in a strange manner. Dean Farrar, for instance, takes occasion to refer to the Jews in the following manner: "They, nursed in the strictest Monotheism, and accustomed only to think of God as infinitely far from man, might have learnt even from the Law and from the Prophets that God is near—in the very mouth and in the very heart of those who love Him, and even bestows upon them some indwelling brightness of His own eternal glory."¹ This characteristically misleading and condescending attitude towards Judaism is remarkable, particularly if it is remembered that it emanates from one who holds as a cardinal article of faith that God cannot be approached without a mediator, and that "even the Law" (not to speak of the prophets, or the psalmist who declared that "God is nigh to all, to all who call upon Him in truth"²) has given us the ennobling conception of man as created in the image of God, and the injunction to love God with all our heart and soul, and to be holy as God is holy.

Another feature of the attack on Judaism is the assertion that it is narrow and tribal, limiting the favours of God to the Jewish people, while the outside world is excluded from the care and mercies of God. Such a view is common among Christians of all the orthodox schools, who themselves consider that only

¹ *Life of Christ*, ii. p. 148.

² Ps. cxlv. 18.

those who subscribe to a particular creed are sure of salvation, but it does not represent the best Jewish thought on the subject. That the literature of the Jews contains uncharitable ideas respecting their Gentile neighbours, with whom they have often been in deadly conflict, is not surprising, but it may safely be said that the Rabbis have never erred so far in this direction as the Church Fathers. To quote the Roman satirists and historians as proofs of Jewish bigotry is the more indefensible, as it is known that the Christians were considered in a still worse light by their pagan fellow-men,¹ so much so that Marcus Aurelius, the noblest of Roman Emperors, was among the notable persecutors of the Christians. Nor is it justifiable to draw a parallel between the Law and the Gospel by quoting the accusation in the Sermon on the Mount that the Jewish moral code bade to love one's friends but hate the enemy. There is nothing in all the Jewish writings to substantiate this charge, which must be regarded somewhat in the nature of a hyperbolic contrast between the old and the new. On the contrary, the Hebrew Scriptures contain numerous injunctions to succour our enemies in distress.²

To represent Jesus as having been free from all prejudices against Gentiles is not in accordance with what is related of him by the evangelists. He confined his labours entirely to the Jews, bidding his apostles, who were all Jews: "Go not in the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not: but rather go to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." On one of the very few occasions on which he met any one outside his people, he adopted a very harsh attitude.

¹ According to Tacitus, the Christians were imbued with "hatred of the human race."

² Cf. *Jew. Ency.*, v. p. 159.

To a Gentile woman who had come to implore his help: "Have mercy on me, O Lord!" he did not answer a word, but said to his disciples: "I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel," and in response to her further supplication, he replied to the woman: "It is not meet to take the children's bread and cast it to the dogs."¹ But even this unexemplary and unsympathetic attitude (a feature which has been too predominant in the relations between Christians and unbelievers and between opposing Christian sects during the greatest part of the history of the Church) is turned against the Jews, and Farrar says of Jesus that "he may have desired to test the feelings of His disciples, who, in the narrow spirit of Judaic exclusiveness, might be unprepared to see him grant his blessings, not only to a Gentile, but a Canaanite and descendant of the accursed race."² Are we not rather to see in this the natural limitation of even great minds, who often cannot escape from the lowest prejudices of their surroundings? Does this not prove the futility of the method which seeks to establish the inferiority of Judaism by collecting the most unworthy utterances of the Rabbis, which, after all, were generally only the subjective expressions of men swayed by the events and passions of the moment? It is only by its highest aspirations that the faith of a man should be shaped, and by which alone it should surely be judged.

Nor is it fair to compare the New Testament with the Talmud in favour of the former. The Talmud is a record of the religious and legal traditions and opinions current among the Jews for about a thousand years.

¹ Matt. xv. 21-28; Mark vii. 24-30. ² *Life*, i. p. 474.

It contains discussions of rival schools, and, even at the final redactions, no attempts seem to have been made to purge it from objectionable and irresponsible views. The Talmud can, therefore, not be charged with any perversities and trivialities which may be extracted from its pages. The Talmud is a religious compilation inasmuch as it is based on the Sacred Scriptures, but it also contains the civil and criminal codes of the Jews. The moral character of the Talmud is due to the innate ethical nature of all Jewish legislation.¹ The Talmud stands in the same relation to the Synagogue as the canon law and the writings of the Church Fathers to the Catholic Church, only that the Jewish literature has been made the common property of the people, whereas the extensive works of the Catholic Fathers and casuists have always been the privileged possession of the theologian. It is, however, not maintained that the Jewish writings do not come up to the moral level of the equivalent Christian literature. On the contrary, so noble is the ethical standard of the Hebrew Sacred Scriptures, so uniformly rich in high ideas are the mental monuments which they have produced, that competent Christian theologians have acknowledged the equality of Jewish ethics with the loftiest thoughts enunciated by Jesus. It can safely be asserted, without any attempt to depreciate his greatness, that there is no utterance, however striking or characteristic, emanating from Jesus (with the sole exception of the idea of non-resistance) which

¹ Dean Farrar has justly remarked: "If we remember that the Talmud is a *corpus juris*, we can explain its character better. The wonder is that there are any moral truths at all there."—*Life*, ii. p. 488.

cannot be traced, often in identical words, to the teachings of the Jewish schools. Harnack, whose special effort in *What is Christianity?* it was to demonstrate the unique individuality of Jesus, concedes that, so far as the question of ethics is concerned, there was nothing in which the Jews of his time were lacking. "The ethical system which Jesus found prevailing in his nation was both ample and profound."¹

There is an interesting reference to this point in Count Tolstoy's *My Religion*, which brings out into bold relief the relation which the sayings of the Rabbis and of Jesus bear to each other. "Some time ago," writes Tolstoy, "I was reading in Hebrew the fifth chapter of Matthew with a Jewish Rabbi. At nearly every verse the Rabbi said: 'This is in the Bible,' or 'This is in the Talmud,' and he showed me in the Bible and in the Talmud sentences very like the declarations in the Sermon on the Mount. When we reached the words, 'Resist not evil,' the Rabbi did not say, 'This is in the Talmud,' but he asked me, with a smile, 'Do the Christians obey this command? Do they turn the other cheek?' I had nothing to say in reply, especially as at that particular time Christians, far from turning the other cheek, were smiting the Jews

¹ *What is Christianity?* p. 70. He adds: "To judge the moral ideas of the Pharisees solely by their childish and nomistical aspects is not fair." As to the objection that the Rabbis did not content themselves with pure ethics, it should be remembered that the teachings of Jesus by themselves have never formed the sole basis of any historic communion, and the fact that immediately after the death of Jesus there began the development of the immense fabric of creeds and ritual of the Catholic and Apostolic Church, is sufficient evidence of the inadequacy of the utterances of Jesus on the truths and problems of life as the sole spiritual possession of the Christian religion.

upon both cheeks. I asked him if there was anything similar in the Bible or in the Talmud. 'No,' he replied, 'there is nothing like it, but, tell me, do the Christians obey this law?' It was only another way of saying that the presence in the Christian doctrine of a commandment which no one observed, and which Christians themselves regarded as impracticable, is simply an avowal of the foolishness and nullity of that law. I could say nothing in reply to the Rabbi."¹

It must also be remembered that, after all, the real value of all ethical teachings does not lie in their sonorous sound and bold conception. It is in their mode of application only that the morals professed by any one are to be judged. From this standpoint, the teachings of Jesus do not retain that supreme position which Christian theologians are apt to assign to them. It would be rather uncharitable to refer to the failure of his followers to maintain the standard set by their master, though the claim that every Christian has been sanctified at his baptism by the Holy Ghost does not make that point unnecessary, but it must be remarked, nevertheless, that though, on the whole, Christians cannot be said to exceed in piety, virtue and self-sacrifice the adherents to other religions, it is just the one distinctively Christian idea which can lay claim to originality, namely, that of non-resistance to evil, which Christians are prepared to abandon. It is not that

¹ *My Religion*, pp. 17, 18. A number of works have been published giving a large collection of apposite quotations from the Jewish writings tending to show that the constituents of the teachings of Jesus and of the "Lord's Prayer" were current among the Jews before his appearance. I would refer to: Deutsch, *The Talmud*; Charles Taylor, *Sayings of the Jewish Fathers*; J. Cohen, *The Deicides*; Jew. Encycl., on *Jesus, New Testament*, etc.

the words of Jesus can be explained away; the monks and nuns of the Catholic Churches prove by much exertion how seriously the literal meaning of Christ's commandments is to be regarded. The vows of chastity, poverty and obedience are taken by those who feel the necessity and ability to live the true Christian life, though it is also these very monastic orders which have shown how impossible it is to carry out the rule of life laid down by Jesus.

In certain directions, Jesus was not satisfied with the workaday morals of the ordinary man, but demanded something heroic: "I say unto you that except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of heaven."¹ But it is just where he oversteps "the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees" that the view of life which he enjoins is turned into a set of fantastic rules followed by a very few, while it is consciously disregarded as utterly impracticable by the overwhelming mass of even the most earnest believers. There cannot, for instance, be the slightest doubt whatsoever that Jesus made poverty a distinctly pronounced, if not decisive, test of discipleship. To the rich young man who appealed to him, Jesus said: "If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast and give it to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven; and come and follow me." (Mark has it: "Then Jesus beholding him, loved him, and said unto him: One thing thou lackest, etc.") He followed this up by telling his disciples: "Verily, I say unto you, that a rich man shall hardly enter into the kingdom

¹ Matt. v. 20.

of heaven. And again I say unto you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of heaven." The question of his followers on this pronouncement and his reply to them, is instructive. "When his disciples heard it, they were exceedingly amazed, saying, who can then be saved? And Jesus beheld them and said unto them, With men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible." ¹

The question: "Who then can be saved?" might be justifiably applied to such an ethical system, were it not that the Church has placed salvation, not on what men do, but on what they believe to have once happened. It is only when touching a question of dogma, even if it be as obscure as the Incarnation, or the eating of the flesh and the drinking of the blood of Jesus, that the Church considers it so all-important as to stake its very existence on it. It was in unmistakable language that Jesus said: "Blessed be ye poor, for yours is the kingdom of heaven," and, as a corollary, "But woe unto you that are rich, for ye have received your consolation." ² There can be nothing more plain in meaning than the following injunction: "But whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also. And if any man will sue thee at the law and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also." ³ But the professed disciples of Christ, as well as the exponents of his words, pay not the slightest heed to them, just as his followers take their oath on the book which contains his command: "I say unto you, swear not at all." ⁴ It is not that Jesus

¹ Matt. xix. 16-26; Mark x. 17-27.

² Luke vi. 20, 24.

³ Matt. v. 39, 40.

⁴ Ibid., v. 34.

meant his words to be taken lightly, for his discourses end with the significant reproach: "Why do you call me Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?" or with the warning: "Not every one that saith unto me Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven," and he likens those that hear his sayings and do them not to a foolish man who built his house upon the sand.¹

The lofty boldness of some of the utterances of Jesus has only been acted upon by a very few chosen spirits, whose innate spiritual energy would have found vent in any other sphere, but with these infinitesimal exceptions and outside the cloister, there is in the ordinary Christian world scarcely one, priest or layman, who makes a serious attempt to live the Christian life as preached by Jesus. The standard set by him is for a small circle of people striving for individual perfection, whose wants are satisfied by the exertion of others, to whom is left the struggle for subsistence, the maintenance of peace and order, and the furtherance of social progress. Even the monk, be it remembered, can only exist because of the generosity of those who perforce lead an un-Christian life, and his security is guaranteed by anti-Christian means. "Take no thought for the morrow," "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth," "Give every man that asketh of thee, and of him that taketh away thy goods ask them not again," "Resist not evil," and other similar utterances, may be considered by the Christian counsels of perfection which he may well dispense with, while even Catholic Rome, the patrimony of St. Peter, may, by its vast accumulation of funded wealth, by its standing armies and guards, be cited as a proof of the futility of such

¹ Matt. vii. 21 ffg. ; Luke vi. 46 ffg.

commandments: they certainly cannot be claimed by those who deliberately disregard them to have introduced a new moral order, to whose sway we should submit on account of its sublime impracticability.

It is the distinction of the Mosaic rule of life that it requires no impossible, superhuman effort, no seclusion or morbid saintliness, to carry out our duty to God and man, while it leaves at the same time a wide field for our spiritual development, so that, like the Jewish prophets, we may rise to the noblest conceptions of our purpose in life. The command of Jesus that we should love our enemies has not made the faintest impression, but the Mosaic precept that we should love our neighbour as ourselves, appeals to us by its natural humanity. Surely, the greatness of moral codes is not to be determined merely by a comparison as to which of them bids highest. The love which ostentatiously pervades the theory of Christian life cannot measure itself with that characteristic demand for justice in Jewish legislation (otherwise so full of consideration for the weak and the needy) that the judge shall not show favour to the poor. It is thus only that there can exist a healthy social organism, where all human forces can be utilized in conformity with our religious convictions, and where our efforts at well-being are not to be carried on against a divine behest, but are to be consecrated by it.

The Jewish view of Jesus does not, therefore, recognize in him a teacher who effected a revolution in the ethical domain of Israel. Nor is it admitted that he gave a unique significance to the Fatherhood of God. It is true, Jesus did realize this idea in a manner that is given to few of our kind to attain. But he raised himself to the sonship of God by such a tremendous effort

of spiritual exaltation that he left all his followers wonderingly watching his ascension ; till in their eyes he eclipsed the glory of the Eternal, whose majesty was henceforth hidden from sight. It was only by the reflected lustre of the Son that the Divine Father was to be revealed to His human children.

It is strange that the idea of a mediator between God and man, a rôle ascribed to Jesus, should be considered a conception of the Divinity higher than that which assumes that God can be approached in prayer and praise direct by every human soul, without the aid of any intermediary, whether human or divine. It was part of the unique greatness of the ethical Monotheism of the Jews that they felt so near to God that they dispensed with every such go-between, who was intended to propitiate the Deity and render him tractable. It was the heathen who utilized the assistance of inferior deities to obtain the favour of the mighty gods, just as the Catholics make use of the saints for a similar purpose. Moreover, the mediation of Jesus has not by any means satisfied the cravings of the Church for roundabout means of supplicating or appeasing God the Father. Hence the existence of a Mother of God, of innumerable saints, all of whom are utilized to intercede not only with God, but with Jesus Christ, the Son of God. It is thus to be observed that by the majority of Christendom even Christ, the mediator, is considered to be difficult of direct access, so that the Virgin Mary, or some favourite male or female saint, is invariably invoked in time of joy or distress.¹ While

¹ As an illustration, I may be permitted to quote without offence the following from Andrew Lang, in *The Making of Religion* (p. 225): " Beyond all doubt, savages who find them-

אֲבִינוֹ שְׁבַשְׁמַיִם, "our Father in heaven," expresses in Judaism, (in accordance with the Biblical conception of the idea of God) the divine Father of mankind, the term "Father" applied to God in the Christian creed has degenerated into a theological appellation, defined by the predominant position of the Son in the Trinitarian Deity.

To the Jew, the question of the divinity of Jesus presents no difficulty whatever. His Jewish contemporaries were quite accustomed to the idea, then current among their neighbours, that men had, by their valour and virtue, been raised to the dignity of gods, and the apotheosis of the Roman Emperors became an ordinary event, for which the Jews, alone of all the inhabitants of the Empire, had no sympathy or understanding. Nor has the modern Jew any necessity to undergo the painful experience of the critical Christian, who has to abandon cherished beliefs about the character and nature of Jesus by an elaborate process of elimination. For, if we consider the blind dogma about the virgin-birth of Jesus inculcated in every Christian, what rational grounds can be offered to substantiate such an astonishing claim? The idea has then no more right to our attention than the similar stories of virgin-births told of many heroes in ancient mythologies; there can be no question of evidence in a matter of this kind, and it

selves under the watchful eye of a moral deity whom they cannot "square" will desert him as soon as they have evolved a practical ghost-god, useful for family purposes, whom they *can* square. No less manifestly, savages, who already possess a throng of serviceable ghost-gods, will not enthusiastically evolve a moral Creator who despises gifts and only cares for obedience." Mr. Lang then adds, in reference to a certain theory of his: "There is a good deal of human nature in man."

is entirely a matter of faith to which every one who desires to share in is welcome. But it should be pointed out, as of very important bearing on the supposed divine nature of Jesus, that Roman Catholic Christianity not only believes in the supernatural origin of Jesus, but maintains also the immaculate conception of his mother, thus ascribing a peculiar miraculous virtue even to the grandmother of Christ. Hundreds of millions of Christians fervently accept the dogma of the immaculate conception of Mary as an essential part of their religion, and to them, of course, the belief in the divinity of Jesus is a natural and congenial feature of their spiritual life.¹

It was just through this super-addition of the current mythological views of the time to the moral elements of Judaism, that the religion of Jesus Christ found such ready acceptance among a population prepared to welcome something nobler than the worn-out and degrading religious conceptions of the heathen. If, therefore, the spread of Christianity is asserted to be one of the evidences of the truth of that faith, it is in reality a proof of the easy assimilation of the Christ legends by those for whose benefit they came into being. The supernatural birth of the human god or divine man, the slaying of a god and his conquest of death, the incarnated Logos, or Word, devised by Plato and Philo Judæus, the rite in which men partake of the flesh and blood of their god, all these and other aspects of Jesus Christ undoubtedly brought down his religion

¹ In Catholic polemics against Protestantism it is argued that if the divinity of Jesus be admitted, there can be no objection to subscribe to the Catholic doctrines about the Mother of God, etc.

to the level of the heathen cults. It is idle to suggest that the companions of Jesus, who are considered more or less responsible for the stories relating to him, must have been impostors in describing events which never happened. It is not necessary to adjudicate on this point, or on the personal standing of Jesus in this respect, as the New Testament biographies possessed by us are none of them the work of immediate disciples of Jesus, while the reliable value of the Gospels can be estimated from the fact that the authors relate to us incidents or conversations at which neither they, nor any follower of their master, could have been present, or have overheard. Nor, as has been said, are we to be impressed because the belief in the divinity and moral supremacy of Jesus has spread over a vast part of the world. The Christian faith was adopted by all the European nations at an early stage in their history, when they were in a very primitive state of culture, just as Christianity assumed its dominant position in the Roman Empire when it had sunk to its lowest condition, and just as no one of any intellectual eminence has ever adopted Christianity on account of its specific doctrines alone. For the hold it still retains on its most civilized votaries, Christianity is indebted to its moral elements, not to what is characteristically Christian, such as its teachings on poverty and non-resistance, but to the healthy and vigorous ethical principles derived from Judaism. Our whole civilization and moral order, glibly described as Christian, is in direct antagonism to the standard of life demanded by Christ. No healthy state of society has ever been built on purely Christian principles. The most pronouncedly Christian bodies, like the crusaders, lived by the sword, and at the present day Christian

kings and emperors demand of their Christian soldiers that they shall take a Christian oath (directly forbidden by Christ) to act as faithful instruments of slaughter and destruction.¹ Our courts of law and the measures of protection to which even the Churches appeal are a negation of the Christian principle of non-resistance. The wealth and prosperity of Christian States are built up on anti-Christian practices, and the Christian denominations carry on their work supported by the proceeds from such sources.

It is not so much that our conceptions of morality are radically wrong, but that the teachings of the Gospels are so hopelessly impossible of accomplishment. If, as Jesus recommended, and his disciples understood him, "it is not expedient to marry," or that, at least, "he that is able to receive it, let him receive it,"² then marriage is undesirable; nay, more, in view of the fundamental dogma of original sin, the propagation of the species is an essentially sinful act. But how then can any Christian conscientiously fulfil the duties to his race? What must become of any community where the bonds of family are to be of no avail, and are even strongly discouraged in such terms as: "If any man cometh unto me, and hateth not his own father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple"³? As a revenge for this high-strung demand, we have Christian society, proud of its Christian professions, but tacitly ignoring them in practice. Our prominent

¹ The traditional and close alliance between European militarism and the Church is the most telling refutation of the claim of Christianity to represent the Messianic religion.

² Matt. xix. 10-12.

³ Luke xiv. 26.

writers and thinkers may admire certain humanitarian ideas of Jesus, but they either deny, or pass entirely over, his supernatural birth, miracles, resurrection and ascension, while those teachings of Christ which distinguish them from our current conceptions of the highest morality are not even touched upon, except for the purpose of condemnation.

As a clinching proof against the Jewish argument that Jesus was not the promised Messiah, Christians have always brought up the sufferings of the Jews, which are supposed to have come upon them for the rejection and crucifixion of their Saviour. That the Jews killed Jesus has at all times been a standing theme of denunciation against them. Dean Farrar puts it clearly in the following language: "Like the mark of Cain upon the forehead of their race, the guilt of that blood has seemed to cling to them—as it ever must until that same blood effaceth it."¹ This sentiment of an enlightened Christian ecclesiastic has been acted upon by less generous Christians with a correspondingly greater barbarity. For this, the Gospel stories of the crucifixion are partly, and the uncharitableness of the Christian teachers mostly, responsible. It should be remembered that the Gospels were composed at a time after the Jews had suffered the overwhelming calamity of the destruction of their State, and this event was interpreted by their enemies as a just punishment for the death of Jesus, the guilt of the Jews thus being raised to the highest pitch. It is characteristic of the bias shown in the evangelical accounts that while we are told that Pilate, with an unusual superfluity of conscientious scruple, washed his hands of the proposed

¹ *Life of Christ*, ii. p. 391.

crime, saying: "I am innocent of the blood of this *righteous* man: see ye to it," the Jews shouted that the blood of Jesus be upon them and their children. Nevertheless, even if it were all true, it is impossible to see how the Jews as a nation can be held responsible for the crime, if the death of Jesus was not only to serve the purpose for which he came into the world, but without which the salvation of the human race could not, according to the divine "scheme," have taken place. Further, the believing Christian, to whom the words of his Saviour are sacred, must recognize that the exclamation of Jesus on the cross: "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do," is decisive evidence that, in the first place, the Jews implicated were not so much evil-minded as under a false conception of duty, and, secondly, that this unconscious sin was to be forgiven to them. Christian theologians have not been over-anxious to draw the only conclusion to be derived from the prayer of Jesus on behalf of his persecutors, and it seems somewhat out of place for Farrar to exclaim: "May that prayer be heard."¹ There are but two alternatives as to the effect of this prayer. If the Jews, from the Christian standpoint, are to be held liable for the alleged crucifixion of Jesus by some of their forefathers, then his prayer to God was not heard—a supposition which will hardly be admitted by his followers; but if his prayer was granted by God—as every Christian must unreservedly concede—then there can be no question but that the Jews were absolved both by Jesus, as well as by God Himself, from the punishment of their admittedly unconscious guilt.

¹ *Life*, ii. p. 391. Farrar prays that the invocation of Jesus be heard by God!

But Christians should least of all throw stones at the Jews for the tragedy which was enacted at Jerusalem about nineteen centuries ago. Christian history is one long record of persecution and intolerance, both towards one another, as well as towards strangers. There is no other faith which has made of religious hatred such a fine art. There is nothing to equal the fury with which one Christian sect pursued another ; the world cannot show another institution which has inflicted so much sorrow and pain on the human race as the Holy Inquisition of the Catholic Church, and the treatment of the Jews is a standing evidence of the absence of that fairness and charity we have a right to expect in a faith which arrogates to itself a monopoly of love.

To appreciate the responsibility we may attach to the Jews for the death of Jesus, it is necessary to consider the manner in which religious enthusiasts and reformers within Christendom have been treated by their former fellows-in-faith. It will be found that scarcely ever have they been tolerated, and that many of them met a violent death at the hands of their opponents. This is such a notorious fact, that it should hardly be worth while to labour the point. But two different incidents, characteristic of many others in Christian history, may be touched upon here with advantage.

During the English Commonwealth, a Quaker, named James Naylor, considered that he was Christ and the Saviour of the world. He carried out many of the actions ascribed to Jesus in the Gospels. He even raised a person from the dead, and, among his followers, one Dorcas Earberry swore before a magistrate that she had been dead two days and that Naylor had brought

her back to life. The matter came before Parliament, and they spent some ten days in inquiries and debates about him. As the result, he was condemned by them to be pilloried, whipped, burned in the face, and to have his tongue bored through with a red-hot iron. All this he bore with much patience. But in the end he was sent to Bridewell, confined to hard labour, fed on bread and water, and prevented from seeing any of his disciples. His illusions dissipated, and he was liberated some time afterwards.¹

While this may be taken as a comparatively enlightened treatment of a visionary, the fate of the reformer John Huss can be quoted as an example of the attitude of the highest clerical and lay body in Christendom towards such people. They were assembled in solemn conclave at the Council of Constance, when Huss appeared before it. Knowing the danger he ran, he had secured beforehand a return safe-conduct from the Emperor Sigismund himself, who attended the Council. Nevertheless, Huss was arrested by order of the Pope and the Cardinals there. He was put on his trial for teaching contrary to the doctrines of the Church, and no defenders were allowed to him, though every kind of testimony against him was admitted by his ecclesiastical judges. His views were finally declared heretical, and it was ordered that all his books be publicly burned. He himself was publicly degraded from the priesthood, and, by order of the civil authorities, he was burned alive, and his ashes thrown into the river.²

¹ Hume, *History of England* (ed. 1803), viii. pp. 398, 399.

² By direction of the same Council, the bones of the English reformer Wyclif were ordered to be disinterred and thrown into a sewer, his followers to be hanged as rebels and burned as heretics.

If ever the guilt committed by the representatives of a nation, or of a religion, can be charged to it for all time, this does surely apply to the martyrdom inflicted by Catholics on Huss. We have here the highest dignitaries of Christendom condemning a man to be burned at the stake though he had done nothing worse than follow the dictates of his conscience by the light of the Gospel—an elementary right which Protestantism afterwards conferred on a large section of the disciples of Christ. The pledged word of the Emperor was broken, with the active approval of the Pope, on the ground that no faith need be kept with heretics if it be to the detriment of the Church, and, to crown the dramatic aspect, the people themselves proved anxious to participate in the godly work of burning an unbeliever,¹ an event which was in those times observed as a popular holiday, when Catholics flocked together, and high-born ladies and gentlemen met in a becoming festive mood, to witness an “act of faith,” by which significant term was designated the burning of condemned heretics and infidels. Yet, who can hold the present-day Catholics responsible for the burning of Huss, or for the violent death of innumerable Protestants who have been executed by the authorities of Catholic Christianity?

Moreover, it is not in accordance with historic fact to maintain that the destruction of the Jewish State, and the subsequent sufferings of the Jews, were a retribution for their treatment of Jesus. The Jewish

¹ There is the touching story of how the attention of Huss, while bound to the stake, was attracted to an old woman who was bowed down under the weight of a bundle of faggots she was zealously carrying to his pyre, at the sight of which he exclaimed: “O sancta simplicitas!”

people were groaning under the tyranny of Rome before the time of Jesus, and their troubles could have been very substantially relieved if they had been willing to identify themselves with the pagan ideas and practices of their conquerors. The Jews, however, like the early Christians, preferred to stand by what they considered to be the truth, and to suffer for it. But what is reckoned as a virtue to the Christian, cannot surely, under similar circumstances, be regarded as a vice if applied to the Jews. The destruction of Jerusalem was a corollary to that irresistible expansion of the Roman Empire which could brook no opposition. Carthage had not been guilty of such a crime as is imputed to the Jews, yet that great city, the rival of Rome, was utterly annihilated, while its inhabitants left no trace behind them. The adoption of Christianity would not have availed the Jews, for, although they formed no State or nation, the Christians themselves were afterwards equally exposed to persecution. The profession of the Christian faith never saved the independence of a people, unless it was backed by a sufficiently strong military force. Rome itself was sacked after it had become Christian, and the Christian nations which first adopted that religion have either been wiped out, or now lead but a phantom existence. Not only was Christian Palestine, in spite of all efforts of the Christian Occident, turned into a Mohammedan country, but Armenia, which boasts of being the first Christian kingdom, is to-day divided between a number of infidel oppressors. The independence of the Christian States in the whole Orient has been destroyed, and even Greece, that classically Christian country, has only been restored to a mere skeleton of its former

self by the armed power of sympathetic Christian nations. How could the Jews have escaped those cataclysms which overwhelmed the Christian States, and why should the calamities of the Jews be treated as the necessary result of a crime, and those of the Christians as examples of misfortune redeemed by the heroism of faith ?

Let it not be said by Christians that their persecution of the Jews is an irrefragable proof of their wickedness. This would be not only a bitter mockery, but, at best, an assertion unworthy of any body of people professing to live by the light of a great ideal of self-sacrifice and love. The office of executioner is not one which we can call blessed. Even those who, like Dean Farrar, seem to owe it to their Christian conscience to stamp the Jews with the mark of Cain, will surely on reflection agree with him that "there is a fire that purifies, no less than a fire that scathes, and who shall say that the very affliction of Israel—afflictions, alas ! so largely caused by the sin of Christendom—may not have been meant for a refining of the pure gold ? God's judgments—it may be the very sternest and the most irremediable of them—come many a time in the guise, not of affliction, but of immense earthly prosperity and ease." ¹

The Church has always regarded those who died for its sake as martyrs worthy of the highest veneration, so much so that Christian tradition has conferred the honour of martyrdom on the apostles themselves. No Christian will suggest that the persecution of the early Christians was due to their wickedness, or that their pagan oppressors enjoyed peace and prosperity because

Life o Christ, ii. p. 391, note 1.

of their virtues. Neither the Irish Catholics nor the Albigenses and Waldenses can be accused of anything worse than obstinacy, and their co-religionists still recall it with justifiable pride. Why should the exception be made in the case of the Jews, whose steadfastness of faith excels in an incomparable measure that of any other religious body? It was apostasy to the dominant religion, Mohammedan as well as Christian, which could have turned the Jew from a slave into a freeman, and who, on reflection, can conscientiously say that the Jew would have acted more nobly if he had consulted his material welfare and ignominiously abandoned the memories of his past and the hopes of the future?

The enormous power of Christianity does not impress the modern Jew, any more than the greatness of the Roman Empire, or the magnificence of Greek culture, turned the Jew of old from his allegiance to those great truths enunciated by Judaism which afterwards became the framework of European ethics and civilization. Truth cannot be decided by votes, and the power of numbers does not count when facts and principles are at stake. The undoubted sway of the name of Jesus over so many of the noblest of men and women is indeed a significant indication of the greatness of his personality, but it is the distinction of Judaism that it does not stand or fall with the character or existence of any human being.

The most rational attitude of the Jews towards Jesus is a purely negative one. He is, of course, of exceeding import to them as a Jewish figure, who has shed a light over vast masses of his fellow-men, and the words ascribed to him are of much interest to Jewish theologians, as showing how deeply he was rooted in the

faith and ideas of his people, but there can be no place for Jesus in the religion of Israel. He is indissolubly bound up with the Christian dogma of the Trinity, and instead of being one of our own flesh and blood, who has raised our kind to divine heights, he has been turned into a deity, who, like many of his pagan predecessors, walked this earth, and by his virtues and death is supposed to have saved mankind from perdition. The real point at issue between Judaism and Christianity on the personality of Jesus is this: Was he God, or was he a mere man? The discussions and disputes about the originality of certain views and dicta are beside the point, and indeed are but trifling, when we consider that we are placed before the decisive issue: Was Jesus God or man? We have clear evidence that, so far from being God Himself, he was not only a man with very human failings, but that he was liable to gross errors.¹ Numberless men have cheerfully undergone the death of martyrdom for conscience' sake, but how can we reconcile the idea that Jesus came to die for mankind with his prayer: "O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass away from me,"² or with the remarkably significant exclamation on the cross: "My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?"³ How could such words have been uttered by one who claimed to be God Himself and to have come down to earth to die for the salvation of the human race? We need

¹ The fact that the Ebionites, who naturally maintained the closest traditional relations with the real Jesus, strenuously denied his Divinity (cf. Eusebius, *Eccles. Hist.*, ch. xxvii.) is sufficient proof against the truth of this dogma, and modern Christian theologians of the critical school have amply confirmed the justification of the views of those primitive Jewish Christians.

² Matt. xxvi. 39.

³ *Ibid.*, xxvii. 46.

not go into any detailed examination of the various acts and utterances ascribed to Jesus, but what, for instance, are we to say of his cursing the fig-tree because it bore no fruit at a time when, as is expressly stated, it ought not to have had any, of the drowning of the Gadarene swine, of useless miracles, like the turning of water into wine, etc. ?

There is one important fact in his life which shows beyond argument the fallibility of Jesus. His most efficacious miracles, those which brought him most credit among his contemporaries, consisted in casting out devils from possessed beings.¹ Circumstantial stories are told of how these demons recognized his character as Messiah and Son of God, and all evidences agree that Jesus shared the then common fallacy that people are troubled with certain mental disorders because they are possessed by evil spirits, which can be expelled or transferred to some other abode. At the present time, there is hardly any man of education who honestly maintains that Jesus was right in his view. Even Farrar says: "That they regarded as demoniacal possession what we regard as epilepsy and mania is certain."² If it cannot be said that Jesus knowingly deceived the ignorant populace and confirmed them in their superstition, from which he drew much of his authority among his followers, then it must be admitted that he was liable to very serious error, both in the physical and spiritual domains.³

¹ Peter, in speaking of Jesus, referred to him as one "who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil" (Acts x. 38).

² *Life*, i. p. 236, note 1.

³ Döllinger says that, following the teaching of Origen

Then there remains the sure and certain faith of the believer in Christ as the Lord and Saviour of mankind. But how can we test the reliability of the promises of Jesus that all who believe in him shall have eternal life? There is, on the contrary, one indisputable proof that Jesus was himself deceived in this respect, and that his disciples were completely led astray by him. If there was one doctrine, one unshakable hope, which upheld the faith of the Christian more than anything else, it was the expected speedy return of Jesus from heaven to rule over the human race. He had told his disciples: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, there be some of them that stand here which shall in no wise taste of death, till they see the son of man coming in his kingdom."¹ After the death of Jesus this became the firm belief of the apostles who had been in constant contact with him, and Paul spoke of it with all the passionate conviction of which he was capable. Prof. Otto Pfeleiderer has put the case clearly, by saying: "All the hopes and wishes of the community, since the first visions of Christ, were directed towards this his earthly return, or Second Coming; nay, these visions, and the certainty of the Crucified One being alive, which was produced by them, had so great fundamental importance for the first disciples only because

(which had, of course, the authority of Jesus), madness was considered only a form of demoniacal possession, and that this view was held in Europe for over 1,000 years, although 400 years B.C. Hippocrates, and later on Galen, already recognized that mental disorders were identical with diseases of the brain. "This is a dark page in the annals of Europe. This state of things involved a retrogressive step for which a parallel can scarcely be found." (*Studies in European History*, p. 183.) The practice of exorcism exists in the Roman Catholic Church to the present day.

¹ Matt. xvi. 28.

they saw in them the guarantee of his immediately impending return and visible dominion. That the Lord was at hand and with him the great day of judgment and of deliverance, the time of the renovation of the world, of the founding of a new order of things, or of the Kingdom of God in place of the Satanic kingdom of the world—this was the constantly recurring watchword in which the whole confession of the first Christians was still comprised.”¹ With time this fundamental Christian hope lost all its force, and Millenarianism, as it was afterwards called, became a despised doctrine condemned as a “Jewish dotage.”

We, who live nineteen centuries after the first disciples of Jesus, know that they were absolutely wrong in their expectation that there would be fulfilled the solemn promise of their Master: “Verily, I say unto you, this generation shall not pass away till all these things be accomplished.”² But if we have been able to test by the perfect certainty of our irrefragable experience the fallacy of this declaration of Jesus, and now know how vain was the hope of the believers in him, what faith can we have in their views of his divine nature, or in the fulfilment of the promises of Jesus in regions beyond our touch and ken?

¹ *Philosophy and Development of Religion*, ii. p. 121. Dean Milman says: “There can be no doubt both that many of the early Christians almost hourly expected the final dissolution of the world, and that this opinion awed many timid believers into the profession of Christianity, and kept them trembling to its authority.” *History of Christianity*, i. p. 419.

² Matt. xxiv. 34; Mark xiii. 30; Luke xxi. 32.

CHAPTER X

THE CHURCHES OF CHRIST

“Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say unto me in that day, Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy by thy name, and by thy name cast out devils, and by thy name do many mighty works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you.” —Jesus, in *Matthew* vii. 21-23.

ALTHOUGH Jesus did not found the Church in the sense in which he is popularly supposed to have done, yet the nucleus of it was formed by the disciples he had gathered around Him and those who believed in his mission as the Messiah promised by the prophets. The small community constituted an integral part of Judaism. The apostles of Jesus were constant and devout attendants at the services of the Temple, and even when, after a considerable number of years, the body of believers had grown to comprise “many thousands,” they were still zealous adherents of the Mosaic institutions.¹ It is to be noted that whatever minor differences there existed in Judaism at that period, there was no impassable division, like that which took place

¹ Luke xxiv. 53; Acts iii. 1; xxi. 20. “The first fifteen Bishops of Jerusalem were all circumcised Jews; and the Congregation over which they presided united the Law of Moses with the doctrine of Christ.” Gibbon, *Roman Empire*, ii. p. 10.

in Christianity shortly after the death of Jesus; the Temple was always the House of God for all Israel. The followers of Jesus were only distinguished from the other Jews by maintaining his Messiahship. This they proclaimed everywhere, even among the worshippers in the Temple, especially to the pilgrims who came to Jerusalem for the Festivals.¹ The Hellenistic Jews, full of fanciful ideas about the institutions and beliefs of Judaism, proved a ready field for the Jesuist propaganda. Hence there soon grew up, besides the original Judaic disciples of Jesus, a group of Hellenist devotees, who, owing to ever-increasing numbers, even disputed the right of the Hebraists to a predominant influence over the charitable distributions in the community. Unlike the Jewish apostles, however, the Hellenists were not satisfied with spreading their faith in Jesus, but attacked Judaism as a whole, and particularly the Temple. It was on such an occasion that one of these zealots, Stephen, was stoned to death by an infuriated crowd.² The persecution which thereupon

¹ Those who criticize the Jewish priests in the Temple, because they took umbrage at this action of the apostles and other followers of Jesus, might consider what would be the consequences to any one attempting to proclaim anti-Christian doctrines in one of the great Cathedrals of Christendom. That such a foolhardy adventure would have led to a result fatal to the delinquent and his associates if it had happened amongst ancient and medieval Christians goes without saying, but even in the present twentieth century the propaganda of only a diverging form of Christianity within the precincts of, say, the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem, would mean death to the culprit.

² The story of Stephen's trial by the Sanhedrin is fictitious. The charges against him and his trial are made to parallel the case of Jesus. In view of the open declaration of Stephen, there was no necessity for the false witnesses which are said to have

ensued seems to have been directed against the Hellenists only, who all left Jerusalem, while the Hebraist apostles remained behind.¹ In these proceedings there distinguished himself by his zeal one named Saul of Tarsus. The fervour of his hatred for the sectarians drove him to pursue them as far as Damascus, but on the road he is said to have seen a celestial vision and to have heard a voice, which proved the turning point in his life. It would be idle to vie with rationalistic Christian historians in their attempts to find an explanation for the alleged miracle, but this is perhaps best understood if we keep in mind the fact that he was subject to trances ;² his companions saw a light, but, as he admitted, no one, except himself heard the voice.³ His sudden conversion was to change the whole outlook of the Christian community. There can be no question but that it was Paul who was the virtual creator of the Church. It is due to Paul that Jesus occupies his predominant position in the Christian system ; it was Paul who constructed an original theory of Jesus and his work, and so became the founder of Christian theology. He knew nothing of the Jesus who lived and died like every other mortal, and he cared even less to inquire about him of those who had seen his master in the flesh. Paul particularly claimed that he did not even confer with the apostles, and that his gospel was not received by him from any man, but

been set up, nor could the Sanhedrin sentence him to death without the authority of the Roman Governor. Stephen is made to die with the same expressions as those uttered by Jesus. Cf. Acts vi. and vii.

¹ Acts viii. 1.

² Acts xxii. 17.

³ *Ibid.*, xxii. 6-10. Cf. also xxvi. 13-18.

that it was a direct revelation to him from Jesus Christ.¹ Although he gives no indication as to the means by which this revelation was communicated to him, he demanded for his teachings such an unswerving acceptance that he emphatically cursed those of his rival propagandists who preached the Christian doctrine differently from him.²

This vaunted independence of Paul of the traditions preserved by the original apostles of Jesus led to far-reaching results within the new religion, and affected fundamentally the attitude of Christianity towards Judaism.

If the Christian attitude towards the Jewish Torah, or Law, may be considered as settled beyond discussion, this is far from being the case when the necessity for that position and its cause are investigated. Paul laid it down that the Jewish Law was opposed to true religion, and must, therefore, be abolished. The views of Paul were completely adopted in the development of Christianity, and it has consequently always been considered the duty of a Christian theologian to justify Paulinism by painting the effects of the Law on the Jews in the blackest colours. The shade varies with the temperament of the writer, and also a great deal with his sense of responsibility. So ingrained, however, is the popular view of the Law even among generous-minded Christians, who would otherwise be quite incapable of committing themselves to any conscious misrepresentation in support of their faith, that Judaism is calumniated by them even where there is no apparent justification.³

¹ Gal. i. 11-17.

² Gal. i. 6-9.

³ Thus it was that a distinguished and gifted Christian divine

Taking the Law at its lowest conception, and Paul as an unimpeachable authority, Christian theologians have endeavoured to prove from Rabbinic writings the validity of his dicta on the subject. Jewish apologists, on the other hand, have attempted to refute these views by quoting the same sources to the effect that the teachings enunciated there show the highest conception of morality, and that not only was every evil deed and unworthy thought unreservedly reprobated by the exponents of Judaism, but that ethics, and not ceremonialism, formed its fundamental basis. But the complete disregard of the Jewish defence has been a tradition of the Christian "Scribes and Pharisees," which has always been held in high honour by them. It is not that the citation of Talmudic and Midrashic passages is the most effective way of settling the question one way or the other; for, after all, the Law of Moses is still a living force; it is still studied and practised by millions of adherents. Why, then, should Christians only judge it by the opinions of its great

like Charles Kingsley could pronounce himself in the following terms: "The Rabbis became, in due time, some of the worst and wickedest men who ever trod this earth," and, as for their ethical conduct, we are told that it "is known to all the world, in the spectacle of the most unrivalled religiosity and scrupulous respectability, combined with a more utter absence of moral sense, in their most cultivated and learned men, than the world has ever beheld before or since." (*Historical Lectures and Essays*, pp. 64-66.) These opinions were not uttered in a homiletic discourse, where, without hurting anybody's feelings, those terrible Rabbis could have been conveniently served up as remarkable specimens of moral failure, but Kingsley spoke thus at the Philosophical Institution in Edinburgh, in a series of historical lectures on "Alexandria and her Schools," of which, by the way, one of the most illustrious representatives was Philo the Jew, a zealous champion of the Law.

opponent Paul? Is it not true that the only really conclusive test is not mere theory, but its practical application?

We may, for instance, be informed by a Christian controversialist that while Jesus taught that if we are smitten on one cheek we should offer the other, a Rabbi said that an ignorant man ought to be killed. Now, it is here that the experience of life would prove decisive. It would then be generally agreed that Christians are as little in the habit of turning the other cheek as it is customary among the Jews to slay their ignorant men. Therefore, instead of basing their theories upon a Pauline conception of the Law, and then supporting it with dead book-lore, Christian historians, and even theologians, might do better to study the effects of the Law on its adherents to-day. It will then be found that it tends to the love of God and man, and that its moral force is powerful and unimpeachable.

For the same practical test has to be applied in the consideration of Christianity by Jews. We may be told by a Jewish writer that while the New Testament shows that Jesus compared the Gentiles to mere dogs, the Jewish Scribes considered that to love one's fellow-man like oneself was the greatest commandment in the Law. Nevertheless, it would be justly pointed out from the Christian side that the quotations may indeed be scrupulously correct, but that the unfavourable construction put upon the words of Jesus in this comparison was all the same unfair and unjustified.

As to the abrogation of the Law, Paul was in open conflict not only with Judaism, but with Jesus and his original apostles. The attitude of Jesus on the question is unmistakably set forth in the following

pronouncement by him, the genuineness of which is well attested by his having lived in accordance therewith: "Think not that I am come to destroy the Law or the prophets; I came not to destroy, but to fulfil. For verily I say unto you, till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass away from the Law, till all things be fulfilled. Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments and shall teach men so, he shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven, but whosoever shall do and teach them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven."¹ Any other evidence that might be brought up to show that Jesus did not always so uncompromisingly declare the validity of the Law, or demand its practice, would merely prove the inconsistency of the utterances ascribed to Jesus or the utter unreliability of the New Testament records. But the life of Jesus,

¹ Matt. v. 17-19. As an illustration that the Jewish view of the Law and that enunciated by Jesus are identical, it is of interest to quote the prayer *אֱהַבָה רַבָּה* in the Jewish Morning Service:—

"With abounding love hast Thou loved us, O Lord our God, with great and exceeding pity hast Thou pitied us. Our Father, our King, for our fathers' sake, who trusted in Thee, and whom Thou didst teach the statutes of life, be also gracious unto us and teach us. O our Father, merciful Father, ever compassionate, have mercy upon us; O put it into our hearts to understand and to discern, to mark, learn and *teach*, to heed, *to do* and *to fulfil* in love all the words of instruction in Thy Law. Enlighten our eyes in Thy Law, and let our hearts cleave to Thy commandments, and unite our hearts to love and fear Thy Name, so that we be never put to shame. . . . Blessed art Thou, O Lord, who hast chosen Thy people Israel in love." (*Daily Prayer Book*, Singer, pp. 39, 40.)

This very ancient prayer may serve to dissipate the dogmatic assumption that the Jews are groaning under the yoke of the Law as if it were a heavy burden.

which is considered by his followers to have been lived as an example to mankind, amply suffices to answer any doubts or controversies on this subject, for he himself carried out the commandments of the Law. Any liberal interpretations of it which he may have sometimes expressed do not detract in any way from this position, as they are also attributed to Rabbis who were unquestioning upholders of the institutes of Judaism.

If there be any further doubt on the point, this is completely settled by the conduct of the brothers, apostles and other immediate disciples of Jesus. Not only did they observe the Law, but they offered every opposition to any attempt to dispense with it. Paul's endeavours to free the Gentile converts from its commands were acceded to after great difficulties only as a compromise, but it was maintained by the Mother-Church in Jerusalem, which was "zealous for the Law,"¹ that Jewish proselytes must still conform to it. In this connexion, the questions whether Paul was justified then or by subsequent events in discarding the Mosaic Law, and whether its abrogation was desirable or necessary for Christianity, are altogether beside the point at issue. We must assume that those who were the constant and faithful companions of Jesus, those to whom he imparted his teachings for transmission to the world, knew and understood the mind of their master. If in strenuously upholding the validity of the Law, they were so mistaken, and so diametrically opposed to his views, as is assumed by Paul, who did not know him in the flesh, then the whole of the evidence regarding Jesus which has been left to us by his first disciples possesses not the slightest claim to trustworthiness.

¹ Acts xxi. 20.

It was not, however, only in regard to the observance of the Law that Paul was at variance with the elder apostles. His self-imposed task to preach the Gospel to the Gentiles was likewise in direct disagreement with their views and contrary to their received doctrine and practice. The original disciples of Jesus not only refused to co-operate with Paul in his work among the Gentiles, as would have been their duty if Christ had commanded them to that effect, but they actually opposed it. Here again, according to the Pauline theory, the attitude and actions of the Jewish Christians seem either indefensible or incomprehensible. The importance of this fact has been well pointed out by F. C. Baur: "The standpoint which the elder apostles occupied over against Paul cannot be sufficiently kept before us. It is as clear as possible that (at this time at least, fourteen years after the conversion of the apostle Paul) their circle of vision did not extend beyond Judaism. They knew nothing at all of a direct Gentile Christianity, it existed without any co-operation from their side; they had still to be brought to recognize it by Paul, and their recognition appeared entirely as a concession forced from them. They could not do otherwise, for they were not in a condition to resist the strength of circumstances and the overpowering personal influence of Paul. But they only consented not to oppose the Pauline Christianity, which with regard to their principles they should in consistency have done; they stipulated also that they should be allowed to hold themselves passive towards it, or, in one word, to ignore it."¹ The subsequent conduct of the elder apostles was altogether inglorious. They

¹ *Paul, the Apostle of Jesus Christ*, Engl. Tr., 2nd ed., i. p. 9.

were undoubtedly opposed to Paul's policy in his work for the conversion of the Gentiles, for which, indeed, they had never any sympathy, yet they agreed, and so did Paul himself, that there were to be two Gospels; the Gospel of the circumcision was to be preached by Peter, and the Gospel of the uncircumcision by Paul. The heads of the Church in Jerusalem, which included James (the brother of Jesus), Peter and John, retained their former standpoint and scene of activity,¹ while Paul and his colleagues were to confine themselves to the heathen. For this concession the elder apostles demanded that the Pauline churches should support financially the Jerusalem community, and Paul gladly agreed to pay their price.²

This bargain was struck because of the success of Paul in gaining converts, and it was on this fact that he based his claims for apostleship and equality with Peter.³ But the differing views of the two sections of the Church gave rise to conflicts, even between Peter and Paul,⁴ and these gradually grew into enmity, so that it has been concluded that the Jewish Christians at Jerusalem, who regarded Paul as a dangerous adversary, took part in the persecution there of the apostle of the uncircumcision.⁵ How far the stories about his compliance with the Law at Jerusalem for appearance' sake are true, is a matter which need not be discussed here, but the extraordinary behaviour and shuffling defence which are attributed to him in his

¹ Baur, *ibid.*, i. p. 126. With the exception of the visit of Peter to Antioch, there is no reliable record that the elder apostles ever travelled beyond Palestine.

² Gal. ii. 9, 10.

³ Gal. ii. 8.

⁴ Gal. ii. 11-14.

⁵ Baur, *ibid.*, i. p. 179 ffg.

alleged trial before the Sanhedrin lead us to expect in him an accommodating attitude if he thought it would suit his purpose.¹

It must here again be pointed out that Paul's mission to the Gentiles was by no means an unprecedented or isolated undertaking within Judaism itself.² The reproach that the Pharisees compassed sea and land to make one proselyte, was the jealous taunt of a Christian propagandist to his Jewish rival, and the pre-Christian missionary activity of Apollos and others like him may be regarded as a Jewish counterpart to that of Paul and his associates. But the first disciples of Jesus belonged to a class of Palestinian Jews, who, under the existing political conditions, had little or no sympathy for the conversion of their Gentile neighbours, and hence there was a decided objection to win them to a belief in the Messiahship of Jesus.

In spite of the attitude of the Jewish apostles, the growth of the Pauline communities made itself felt more and more in the development of the nascent Church. True, the old views were still maintained by the Jewish Christians, but their connexion with the Gentile Christians and lack of patriotism in the wars against the Romans brought about a complete estrangement between the Jewish believers in Jesus and the

¹ Acts xxiii. 1-10. Paul's statement to the Sanhedrin: "I am a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee: of the hope and resurrection of the dead I am called in question," was beside the point and an unworthy attempt to confuse the issue, but, fortunately for Paul's character, this incident, during which the Pharisees and Sadducees on the Council all at once began to quarrel on a subject on which they must have long ago agreed to differ, makes the whole story seem fictitious.

² On this subject, cf. *supra*, p. 96 ffg.

general mass of the Jews. The failure of the Jewish revolts and the ensuing misery scattered also the Jewish-Christian communities in all directions, and reduced them to insignificance. Instead of representing the Mother-Church of Christ, they came to be regarded as a despised heresy, known under the names of Nazarenes and Ebionites. As the claims of Paul's apostleship rested on the increase of his followers, so the weight of numbers decided the interpretation of the religion of Christ, and became henceforth practically one of the evidences of the truth of that faith.

The conflict between the elder apostles and Paul was only the beginning of the sectarian strife that henceforth became a constant feature in Christianity. Nothing speaks so much against the common assumption that Jesus founded the ecclesiastical organization called after his name as the fact that he left nothing absolutely and incontestably definite either as to his person or the form of his community. To this fatal omission can directly be traced all the hatred that has been generated within the Church, and the Christian blood shed by Christian hands for Christ's sake. The vagueness and uncertainty of his composite divine and human natures led on the one hand to a free development of contradictory speculations regarding him, while, on that very account, there was presented no check to the creation of dogmatic formulas on the point. Hence there was a marvellous and ever-growing crop of heresy within the primitive Church. Particularly fantastic, and, therefore, the more dangerous, were the Gnostic sects which endeavoured to amalgamate Christianity with Oriental theosophies. The God of the Jews was considered by them as an inferior deity superseded by

Christ, and altogether they exhibited a special repugnance to the Jews, whose religion was misconstrued by the Gnostics in order to establish their doctrine of the antagonism of the principles of good and evil. Christianity was, however, saved from the Gnostic peril by a juster appreciation of Judaism in the Græco-Roman Churches, and by their steadfast adherence to the belief in the divine character of the Jewish Scriptures, so fully recognized by Jesus and his apostles. Nevertheless, though the Gnostic sects have long since been extinguished, their influence has left a permanent impression on Christianity. The Gospel of John, the peculiar views and tendency of which became predominant in Christian theology, while being an attack on the Gnostic theories, yet makes an attempt to reconcile them with those prevailing in the other sections of the Church. With the introduction of the dualistic principle of good and evil, Judaism and the Judaizing Christian sects are henceforth treated with that hostility towards them that formed so marked a feature of Gnosticism.

Equally dangerous to the normal development of Christianity was the formidable Manichean heresy. Taking its rise in Persia, it spread all over the Roman world, and, in the words of Eusebius, proved like a deadly poison to Christianity. The principles of Manes, who proclaimed himself the Paraclete, or Comforter, promised by Jesus, also included the idea of the two opposing forces of light and darkness. The Manicheans vigorously propagated their views, which spread far and wide, and also left a lasting impression on Christian dogma and the Christian conception of life.

Of particular interest are the Christian sects which

maintained a Unitarian view of the Godhead. The Nazarenes and Ebionites were in bad repute in Christendom for their rejection of the divinity of Jesus, but it is of the greatest importance to remember that they possessed the beliefs and traditions of his first and immediate disciples. In the third century there arose the heresies of Sabellius and Paul of Samosata, the Bishop of Antioch, who denounced Trinitarianism, or Tritheism, and taught purely monotheistic doctrines concerning God.

The most severe struggle Trinitarianism had to sustain was with the Arians. It was Origen, the famous Father of the Church, who, in his Platonising speculations concerning the three persons of the Christian Divinity, asserted that, though they were equal in regard to their eternal co-existence, the Son was inferior to the Father, and the Holy Ghost inferior to both. The views taught by Origen were accepted, until discussion led to show that this doctrine actually presented an idea of three separate Gods. The fierce controversies on the subject, endeavouring to steer clear of Unitarianism on the one hand and of Polytheism on the other, had the not very happy result of revealing to an extraordinary extent what an intimate knowledge human beings may presume to have of the essence of God and of its component parts. The battles which were fought between the Arians and Trinitarians present some of the most unedifying incidents in the history of religion, and show the effectiveness with which the authority of earthly rulers shaped the cardinal doctrines of Christianity.¹ Councils

¹ "The prerogatives of the King of Heaven were settled, or changed, or modified in the cabinet of an earthly monarch." Gibbon, *Roman Empire*, ii. p. 416.

proved unavailing to settle the schism, and the chances of the two rival creeds seemed for a long time uncertain until, by political fortune, Trinitarianism obtained the upper hand and final victory.

Amidst all this clash of arms of theological warfare, there developed the form of Christianity which has assumed the title of Catholic. It is a mistake to assume that Catholicism represents the broad stream of Christian faith, while the other sections, the so-called heresies, were mere rivulets. Nestorianism, for instance, was once a great Church, greater in numbers and extent than the Greek and Roman Churches together, but it was unfortunate, and proved that Christianity, no matter how powerful, might also be subject to extinction by other forces if placed under unfavourable circumstances. The expansion of Catholicism, and its victory over the numerous sects which impeded the way and struggled for mastery, are not by any means the result of the truth and apostolic origin which Catholics arrogate for their Church. Ecclesiastical history bears conclusive evidence of the paramount importance which politics played in the development of all sections of the Church, and it is highly significant that the Papacy is not merely a religious institution, but is vitally political, with the most widely extended diplomatic ramifications. The successes of the Catholics over the Arians were as much due to secular causes as was the failure of Catholicism in its fight with Protestantism.

Nor was Catholicism the faith of all the great Fathers and Councils of the Church. In the centuries preceding the ossification of the faith into iron-bound creeds, eminent theologians taught doctrines which were at variance with those proclaimed later on as traditional,

and Councils elaborated dogmas which were repudiated by subsequent conclaves. The occasional good fortune of Arius in his bitter combat with Athanasius for the favour of the Emperors, and the successful propagation of Arianism among the barbarians by zealous missionaries, placed that form of Christianity for some time in the position of conqueror, a predominance which it only lost by the adverse decision of all-powerful princes, who, either through caprice or political exigencies, espoused the cause of Catholicism.

In spite of its name of Catholic, i.e. Universal, that Church is only a Græco-Roman institution. Before the centre of gravity passed on to Rome, the Emperor in Constantinople was its virtual head and protector. The Bishop of Constantinople was too much under the power of the Emperor to be able to attain to an independent status, and his position was not very much different in scope from that of his modern successors. It was in Rome that the local Bishop developed a system of hierarchical supremacy, which in extent and splendour stands unrivalled. The glory of the former Mistress of the World was appropriated by the alleged successors of the humble Jewish fisherman Peter, and ambitious servants of Jesus of Nazareth seated themselves on the vacant throne of the Cæsars. The Kingdom of Heaven preached by Jesus, a kingdom not of this world, now received its highest embodiment in a priesthood whose claims extended over the souls and bodies of the believers, nay, of the whole race. Recognized by the faithful as the highest authority over the human conscience, as well as the heir of the prestige of Rome, the Popes extended indefinitely the range of their sway over their superstitious and barbarous followers. The success

with which this policy was carried out still further emboldened the Sovereign Pontiffs, who, from their palace in Rome, assumed jurisdiction over the temporal, as well as the spiritual, affairs of the nations. Its pretended divine mandate was, however, not recognized by the important Greek and Oriental sections of Christianity, and received a fatal blow through the complete repudiation of papal authority by the most vigorous nations formerly under its sceptre. But to Western Catholicism the great ruling passion still remained the absolute supremacy of Rome.

It is claimed by Roman Catholicism that it alone represents the true exposition of Christ's words and will, and that it is the only pure channel of spiritual blessing vouchsafed to mankind by Christianity. It is assumed that Christ bequeathed the rule of the Church to Peter, by telling him that he was the rock on which the Church was to be built, and that to him were given the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven¹; this, it is asserted, applies not only to Peter, but to all his successors for ever. On the strength of a tradition which has no other basis than the systematic attempt to make Peter carry out the identical apostolic mission ascribed to Paul, Peter is alleged to have also been in Rome and to have undergone martyrdom there. It was the Bishops of Rome who succeeded Peter in the office he is said to have occupied while in the Imperial city. On this slender thread hangs the whole mighty edifice of the Papacy.

The pretended unity of the Church, for which Roman Catholicism stands, has never existed. The work of Paul was resented by the Jewish Christians, headed

¹ Matt. xvi. 18, 19.

by the brother of Jesus and the primitive apostles, and Paul himself had to recognize that beside his gospel of uncircumcision, there was another gospel, that of the circumcision. Enough has already been said here to show that from its beginning the Church was vitally divided on matters of dogma and observance. But as much as the existence of every heresy which seriously troubled the peace of the Church may be traced in the creeds elaborated by its Councils, so the absence of the desired unity is testified by the frantic efforts which have been made to enforce it. From early times, the Catholic theologians in sympathy with Rome have spoken in the severest terms of the terrible sin of separation from the Holy See of St. Peter. St. Augustine's dictum that the sacrilege of schism surpasses all wickedness, expresses authoritatively the prevailing sentiment on the subject, and it was held that no action, however meritorious, not even martyrdom for Christ's sake, could atone for the inexpiable sin of dissent or independent thought. Of course, it required drastic measures to maintain discipline within a Church where conformity became the greatest saving virtue.

It is as the recognized faith of the Fathers that Catholicism claims to fully represent the Church of Christ. It is asserted that the doctrines which they professed have been preserved, and the same spirit which animated the Church of the Fathers exists also, in the Catholicism of to-day. In so far as the majority of the Fathers are considered to have taught the faith of the apostles, the Catholic body is the legitimate successor of the early Church. The unchanging character of its doctrines is the chief foundation of Roman Catholicism as the only true Church of Christ. This prominent

trait does not, however, appear so marvellous when it is remembered that it only consists in the fixed determination never to repudiate any dogma or rite once officially adopted into the communion, and the absolute refusal to admit, in the face of every evidence, the existence of error in its teachings. The law of evolution, to which, in spite of anything that may be said to the contrary, even Roman Catholicism is subject, may be recognized in the dogmas that have been added from time to time under the specious pretext of development.¹ No doubt, it was wise for the Papacy to confine its pretence to infallibility within the domain of theoretic doctrine, though the Church is much inclined to make itself paramount also in other spheres. If Roman Catholicism had set itself up as an equal authority in the political field, the world would have no difficulty in demonstrating that it was often the cause of its own downfall.² But in the realm of dogma it is not so easy to show that the Church is mistaken, or leads into error. Whether the invocation of official saints is effective in obtaining the ear of the Almighty, whether there is a place of suffering after death corresponding to purgatory,

¹ The dogmas of the immaculate conception of Mary and the infallibility of the Pope are cases in point.

² Ranke says in regard to the events in the sixteenth century: "We are warranted in declaring that the Poppedom seemed destined to suffer no injury to which it had not itself conduced in one way or another by its tendency to interfere in political affairs." (*History of the Popes*, i. p. 240.) The same weighty authority also tells us that "Protestantism, in the earlier half of the sixteenth century, was indebted for its progress to nothing so much as to the political labours of the Popes. It was to these, so far as human judgment can decide, that Protestantism now owed its deliverance and its confirmed strength." *Ibid.*, ii. p. 292.

are matters which cannot, so to speak, be palpably disproved, and those who care to adopt the views of the Church on these points are free to do so. In 1854 Pope Pius IX declared as an article of faith the immaculate conception of Mary, the mother of Jesus. It is thereby asserted that Mary, like Jesus, was conceived without the stain of original sin ascribed by Christianity to every human being. The papal declaration that this doctrine was revealed by God may affect only the faithful, who are solemnly called upon to believe it on pain of being considered schismatic, though there are irrefragable testimonies to the fact that this doctrine is neither apostolic, nor has it been maintained by all the Fathers of the Church. But any such proof, the strength of which would otherwise be considered more than sufficient on which to build a dogma, must be ignored as soon as the Pope has officially pronounced himself on the subject "by the authority of our Lord Jesus Christ, of the blessed apostles Peter and Paul, and our authority."

But whether Pope, Council or any other body is the highest authority without appeal in the domain of Christian life and faith, is, after all, a matter of little consequence to those outside the pale. The doctrines of Catholicism must be judged on their own merits, and without regard to any stray, misunderstood or misinterpreted sentence attributed either to Jesus or his apostles. It has been truly said: "Chacun a sa bible," and other Christian sects have not been slow to construct their theories on biblical passages, supported by patristic authorities, directly contradicting those used by Catholicism. But even apart from the probability that the Catholic doctrines may largely be subverted by tracing

them to their alleged sources, these doctrines are often not in conformity with reason or the highest form of religion, two requirements to which Catholicism itself claims to pay some respect. However well founded Catholic doctrines or practices may, therefore, be from the standpoint of the believing Christian, they must still stand the test of extra-Scriptural and moral criticism.¹

Among the features which appear most prominent in the Catholic system is its priesthood. The Catholic priest occupies neither the position of teacher, as the Rabbi does in Judaism, nor the office of mere church official, like the Protestant minister, but he is an indispensable intermediary between God and man. The adherents to Catholicism are divided into the sacerdotal class which dispenses the means of salvation, and the laymen who receive them. Without the priest the believer cannot enter into the Kingdom of God. It is the priest who baptizes, and so admits the child into the community of Christ; he confirms into the faith, by which the believer receives the Holy Spirit; he hears the confession of sins, which he has the power to forgive on behalf of God. The priest, no matter what his spiritual or moral condition may be, can, at any time he pleases, turn bread and wine into the actual, real flesh and blood of Jesus, with all the divine qualities attributed to it, by

¹ R. H. Hutton has made the following appropriate remarks on the pretended infallibility of the Roman Catholic Church: "I do not believe that such a thing as merely intellectual infallibility as to spiritual truths is conceivable at all. Suppose, for instance, that the Church teaches that of 'faith, hope and charity' the greatest is charity; but the while she teaches this, her moral and spiritual policy and practice are of a kind to give the world which she teaches a most perverted and false view of the true meaning of charity. Can then hers be 'infallible' teaching in any sense at all?" (*Theological Essays*, Preface, p. 12.)

merely pronouncing the phrases : " This is my body," " This is my blood," and the partaking of this bread and wine (the Eucharist) is considered indispensable for eternal salvation. It is the priest who unites man and woman in holy wedlock, and who must be called in at the last moment of life to administer the rites of the Church. And the qualification which puts this superhuman, almost divine, power into the hands of a man is that he should be ordained as one of the sacerdotal order.

Invested with such extraordinary privileges by the Deity, able to perform the miracle of the Eucharist at will, and the dispenser of the heavenly blessings of the sacraments, it is not surprising that the Catholic priest obtained a hold over his flock of which no pastor of any other creed or denomination can boast. Whoever believes that the priest can do what the Church claims for him, cannot have much compunction in accepting any other of its doctrines. Hence the extreme importance which Catholicism attributes to submission to priestly authority, from the Pope downwards.

The office of priesthood furnishes a remarkable instance of the development of Christian doctrine. It is a common assumption in Protestant circles that the Catholic form of priesthood is merely an accidental corruption of the Christian ministry. True, there existed nothing like the Catholic priest in the apostolic age, but then Christianity was not yet organized. Those who believe that the Church of the first three or four centuries still taught a pure Gospel, as it is understood in Protestantism, must admit the existence of a priestly class as part of the Christian system. So ingrained and far-reaching is this phase of Christianity that the

absence of a properly ordained priesthood shuts out a whole Church from the Kingdom of Christ. The Church of England possesses the sacrament of Holy Orders, though it does not bear allegiance to the Pope, but Roman Catholicism, in its turn denies the validity of Anglican Orders, and thereby refuses to recognize Anglicanism as part of the Holy Catholic Church. Whoever, therefore, believes that Anglicans are really schismatics, to which Romanism has reduced them, finds them in a serious plight, for then the Church of England has not the effective means of grace, and her baptisms and marriages are null and void. Hence strenuous efforts have been made by champions of Anglican Orders to obtain the recognition of other Catholic bodies, like the Greeks, Russians, etc., who in their turn, look on the Romanists, as well as on the Anglicans, as being in a state of schism.

If the powers of the Catholic priest for good have been admittedly great, so have been his opportunities for evil. But it is difficult to see how the effects of Catholic sacerdotalism can be condemned with all the force they deserve without implicating Christianity as a whole for having produced this priestly caste, which, basing itself on the words of Jesus, completely dominated Christianity for about fourteen centuries, and is still the distinctive feature of the most important Christian Churches.¹

¹ Yet Dean Farrar, in commenting, as an Anglican, on the words of Jesus: "Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church," etc., has to say: "Were it not a matter of history, it would have been deemed incredible that on so imaginary a foundation should have been rested the fantastic claim that abnormal power should be conceded to the Bishops of a Church which almost certainly St. Peter did not found, and in

The original sin of the priestly sacerdotal caste is its lust for domination. It is for this purpose that the priest has placed himself as an impenetrable barrier between God and man, and has arrogated unto himself the exclusive ability and right to dispense eternal salvation and to shut out any human being from the presence of his Maker. By issuing the ban of excommunication, the priest condemns a man to every form of ostracism in this world and to eternal perdition in the next. The justice, or otherwise, of such an excommunication appears irrelevant in so far as the effectiveness of it is concerned, for, in the quarrels of ecclesiastical with secular princes, whole countries were sometimes laid under the ban and the people deprived of even the sacraments necessary for eternal salvation. By instituting the confessional, the priests became the guardians and guides of the minds and consciences of the faithful. There have always been systematic encroachments of priestly jurisdiction on the worldly affairs of men, and the Popes not only demanded unquestioning obedience in the spiritual domain, but also claimed an autocratic sway over the secular actions of nations.

The whole ecclesiastical history of Christendom shows one great struggle between the rights of the laity and the assumptions of the priesthood. Hence it has been

a city in which there is no indisputable proof that he ever set his foot. The immense arrogancies of sacerdotalism; the disgraceful abuses of the confessional; the imaginary assumption of a right to crush and control the civil power; the extravagant usurpation of infallibility in wielding the dangerous weapons of anathema and excommunication; the colossal tyrannies of the Popedom and the detestable cruelties of the Inquisition—all those abominations are, we may hope, henceforth for ever things of the past."—*Life of Christ*, ii. pp. 14, 15.

the policy of the shepherd to keep his flock in subjection as much as possible. The tremendous influence which, in early and medieval Christianity, the ecclesiastics obtained is due to the way in which they succeeded in keeping all knowledge, and the power conferred by it, completely to themselves. This egoistical element must not be overlooked when the services of the Christian priesthood to certain aspects of European civilization are considered. Not that the servants of the Church were distinguished by their thirst for knowledge. There has always been a dread of the effects which such a desire might have on the ecclesiastical polity, and the ignorance that was permitted, if not fostered, even among the highest of the clergy, is surprising.¹ If the ecclesiastical order, which held the monopoly of learn-

¹ The following quotations from Hallam's *Europe during the Middle Ages* will give a clear and authoritative idea of this subject: "The fourth Council of Carthage in 398 prohibited the reading of secular books by Bishops. Jerome plainly condemns the study of them, except for pious ends. All physical science especially was held in avowed contempt, as inconsistent with revealed truths. Nor do there appear to have been any canons made in favour of learning, or any restriction on the ordination of persons absolutely illiterate" (iii. p. 273). "Jortin asserts that many of the Bishops in the general Councils of Ephesus and Chalcedon could not write their names" (ibid., p. 273, note). "In England, Alfred declares that he could not recollect a single priest south of the Thames (the most civilized part of England) at the time of his accession who understood the ordinary prayers or could translate Latin into his mother tongue" (ibid., p. 288). "In almost every Council the ignorance of the clergy forms a subject for reproach. It is asserted by one held in 992 that scarcely a single person was to be found in Rome itself who knew the first elements of letters. Not one priest of a thousand in Spain, about the age of Charlemagne, could address a common letter of salutation to another" (ibid., p. 288). Such remarkable proofs of the prevailing darkness can be multiplied indefinitely.

ing, was thus situated, the density of the darkness that prevailed among the laity scarcely needs any proof. Of this Hallam says: "For many centuries, to sum up the account of ignorance in a word, it was rare for a layman of whatever rank, to know how to sign his name."¹ The opposition to the freedom of knowledge, so determined as to render it almost instinctive, is characterized to the present day by the Roman Catholic institution of the Index of prohibited books, which not only sets out a list of authors and books which must not be read by the faithful, but in practice gives the priest the widest scope in supplementing this list whenever in his own pastoral duties he considers a certain writer to offend against Catholic faith and morals.

Nor is the tyranny confined to the relations between the clergy and the laity. The same demand for unquestioning obedience is made by the higher to the subordinate ranks of the hierarchy. The superior officers of the Church are very jealous of their prerogatives, and the struggle for coveted positions has always been exceedingly keen. As Gibbon puts it: "Ambition is a weed of quick and early vegetation in the vineyard of Christ."² Of course, whenever there came into question the position of the Papacy in its relation to secular powers, not the slightest invasion of the clerical privileges would be

¹ *Ibid.*, 286 (note). He quotes the cases of the famous Emperor Frederick Barbarossa; John, King of Bohemia, in the middle of the fourteenth century, and Philip the Hardy, King of France, and son of St. Louis none of whom could read.

² *Roman Empire*, vii. p. 374. "Under the first Christian princes, the chair of St. Peter was disputed by the votes, the venality, the violence of a popular election; the sanctuaries of Rome were polluted with blood; and from the third to the twelfth century the Church was distracted by the mischief of frequent schisms."

permitted by the head of the Church. As Pope Julius emphatically expressed himself in this regard: "It shall never happen, we will never endure it, we will rather let the whole world be ruined."¹ We have, therefore, the strange fact that there were frequent wars between the Popes and the Catholic German Emperors, between the head of the Church and the most zealous Catholic nations, and in a sanguinary conflict between Pope Paul IV and the Spanish under Alva, the Holy Father did not scruple to employ Protestant troops against his Catholic children.²

A concomitant feature with the arrogance of the hierarchy, which has attained to such an evil repute under the name of priestcraft, is its marked intolerance. It is difficult to say how much of this attitude to be found in the New Testament is due to the *état d'âme* of the chroniclers, but it is known that, whereas the Christians first distinguished themselves by their solidarity and charity, the hatred of the various Christian sects towards each other became so prominent that they attracted the attention of the pagans. "There are no wild beasts so ferocious as Christians who differ concerning their faith," was the statement of a heathen in the fourth century.³ Fierce intolerance seems to have been known in Christianity from early times. Eusebius relates of John, the apostle, whose sweetness

¹ Ranke, *History of the Popes*, i. p. 209 (note).

² "Who were these by whom the Pope was defended against such good Catholics? The most effective among them were Germans and Protestants to a man! They amused themselves with the saintly images on the highways, they laughed at the mass in the Churches, were utterly regardless of the fast days, and did things innumerable for which, at any other time, the Pope would have punished them with death" (*ibid.*, i. p. 222).

³ Lecky, *Rationalism*, ii. p. 31.

of disposition was considered a notable part in his character, that he fled in great trepidation from a bath on seeing it polluted by a heretic. With the growth of the influence of the Church, this trait came more and more to the fore. As soon as Christianity obtained the support of the secular arm, it was used with the fullest force against unbelievers and heretics. The persecution of the Jews is a chapter of Christian history, a chapter not yet concluded, which will ever stand out as the most glaring contrast between the superior professions of love and the real practice, and it must be to many generous-minded Christians, the followers of the ideal Prince of Peace, a burning shame and confession of weakness that it was the Emperor Julian, surnamed by the Church "the apostate," and the leaders of the anti-Christian French Revolution, who, until the nineteenth century, alone proclaimed the complete freedom of the Jewish people. The hatred that has been lavished by Christian sects on each other is without parallel in its intense ferocity. So far as it could be carried out, no quarter was given, although both sections professedly fought under the banner, and for the greater glory, of Christ. Many heresies were literally drowned in blood. Human life was held very cheap in the repression of any attempt at a movement for independent religious thought or practice, no matter how minute and trivial. There has been nothing more terrible than the extirpation of the Albigenses and Waldenses, or the repression of the various other efforts for the reformation of the Church. To those of the present day who live under the ægis of liberty of conscience, the extent and depth of the tyranny of the Church, and the cruelty of spirit which it engen-

dered among its adherents, are inconceivable.¹ The Holy Inquisition, the institution of Roman Catholicism for the purification of the faith by the rack and the stake, was, by reason of the number of its victims and the amount of suffering inflicted by it, the most dastardly instrument of cold-blooded crime ever invented by man.

In the pursuit of its task of exterminating the heretic or crushing the infidel, the Church has not hesitated to make use of armed force. The extent to which Christianity is responsible for war is perhaps not so easy to determine, for patriotic, or rather dynastic and personal, motives might have come into play, but the fact that the Church was but too frequently the cause of bloodshed is placed by history beyond a doubt.² Apart

¹ To obviate the necessity for any further description of this harrowing subject, it is perhaps sufficient to give a few excerpts from Bishop Burnet's account of the proceedings against the Lollards in England: "If a man had spoken but a slight word against any of the constitutions of the Church, he was seized by the Bishop's officers; and if any taught their children the Lord's Prayer, the Ten Commandments, and the Apostles' Creed, in the vulgar tongue, that was crime enough to bring them to the stake, as did six men and women at Coventry in the Passion week of 1519, being the 4th of April" (*History of the Reformation of the Church of England*, p. 50). "So there were many brought into the Bishop's courts, some for teaching their children the Lord's Prayer in English, some for reading the forbidden books, some for harbouring the preachers, some for speaking against pilgrimages or the worshipping and adoring of images, some for not observing the Church fasts, some for not coming to confession and the sacraments, some for speaking against the vices of the clergy" (*ibid.*, p. 265). "At this time (1532) there was an indulgence of forty days' pardon proclaimed to all that carried a faggot to the burning of an heretic" (*ibid.*, p. 271). What a telling commentary on the vaunted freedom of the Christian from the yoke of the Jewish Law!

² "Almost all Europe for many centuries was inundated with blood, which was shed at the direct instigation, or with

from the relentless attacks on the heathen and the infidel, the Saxon and the Moor, the politico-religious wars of Catholic against Protestant, the Church used the sword for purely selfish motives, when, for instance, the Pope would embroil Catholic Europe in a war on account of his quarrels with the German Emperor on a question of some prerogative. The two most disastrous struggles directly called forth by the Church are the Crusades and the Thirty Years' War, the former against the unbelieving Saracens and the latter against erring fellow-Christians, but in both cases extreme ferocity was a conspicuous feature. In the Thirty Years' War, Germany was turned into a howling wilderness, and the unspeakable horrors enacted in the sack of Magdeburg are only equalled by those of which the crusaders were guilty in their first conquest of Jerusalem. The lessons that are furnished by these great struggles show that the Church was entirely oblivious to the dictates of humanity and mercy in the bloodshed it provoked, and that while Christianity claimed to possess every power in a shadowy heaven, the absolute failure of the Crusades and the loss of the millions of Christian souls they entailed, is a conclusive proof that, tremendously important and far-reaching as would have been the result of Christian success, the Church cannot command destiny or the favour of God.

It is evident that, whatever may be contended as to the doctrinal truths of Roman Catholicism, its moral record is a direct denial of the mark of holiness to which

the full approval, of the ecclesiastical authorities, and under the pressure of a public opinion that was directed by the Catholic clergy, and was the measure of their influence." Lecky, *Rationalism*. ii. p. 32.

that Church lays special claim as one of its chief characteristics. Apart from the private lives of Popes and other high Church dignitaries, whoever has read anything of the unutterable horrors of the Inquisition, of the murder of untold millions of Red Indians by the Spaniards, of the treacherous massacre of St. Bartholomew, the success of which was officially celebrated and commemorated by the Church with great pomp, or of the atrocities of Alva in the Netherlands, carried out with the full approval of the Papacy,¹ cannot for a moment admit the Catholic claim to holiness, particularly as the victims were not tortured and murdered on account of their moral depravity, but solely by reason of their religious beliefs.

It must be ungrudgingly, nay, cheerfully, conceded that during its long history, Roman Catholicism has produced men and women who have been a glory to the human race, and that many members of that communion have been among the great benefactors of mankind. To devout Catholics it must, therefore, appear ungenerous, if not unjust, to see their Church condemned on account of its moral aspects, and their feelings deserve consideration. Yet, in view of the pretended monopoly of holiness by Roman Catholicism, not to speak of its own utter condemnation of the morals of unbelievers and heretics, it is impossible to avoid examining her credentials in this matter. The saints of Catholicism do not count, for apart from the fact that they are comparatively only few in number, they were canonized, not merely on account of their moral excellencies, but either because of an extremely ascetic life, which frequently assumed grotesque and

¹ Ranke, *History of the Popes*, i. p. 436.

debased forms,¹ or for some great service in the spread of Christianity. It is only by the latter title that a monster like the Emperor Constantine was adopted among the lights of the world, while many saints, if not mythical as far as their very existence is concerned, have received their canonization for suffering death in some religious persecution. It is a most suspicious feature about the creation of saints that this should have mostly taken place in the misty periods of the early and dark ages of Christianity. But it is sufficiently significant that the first twenty-five Popes should all claim the glory of martyrdom, and that not less than the first fifty-six heads of the Church (up to the year 530) have, without one exception, been enrolled among the saints, while since St. Nicholas the Great, who ascended the chair of Peter in 855, there were, during the very long period of over a thousand years, only four Popes who have obtained that dignity. Either the Roman

¹ This subject, though very interesting, it is unnecessary to deal with here, but, as a general statement, I would confine myself to the following quotation from Mosheim on the lives of the saints: "By what means were these men sainted? By starving themselves with a frantic obstinacy and bearing the useless hardships of hunger, thirst and inclement seasons, with steadfastness and perseverance; by running about the country like madmen in tattered garments and sometimes half-naked; or shutting themselves up in a narrow space, where they continued motionless; by standing up for a long time in certain postures, with their eyes closed, in the enthusiastic expectation of divine light. All this was saint-like and glorious; and the more that any ambitious fanatic departed from the dictates of reason and common sense, and counterfeited the wild gestures and the incoherent conduct of an idiot or a lunatic, the surer was his prospect of obtaining an eminent rank among the heroes and demigods of a corrupt and degenerate Church." (*Ecclesiastical History*, i. p. 278.)

Pontiffs have sadly degenerated, or the system of canonization of saints in the earlier ages of Christianity reduced the standard of qualification for the honour to an exceedingly low degree.

But whether Catholicism produced a large or small number of saints is immaterial, so long as this has had no appreciable effect on the mass of the faithful. The pictures that we have of Catholic society in the past, as well as the present moral position of Catholic countries, do not by any means bear out the idea that that communion is endowed with an exceptionally high ethical standard of life. We find, on the contrary, that Protestants do not only compare favourably with Catholics in the sphere of morals, but that the Catholic populations of Southern Europe notoriously conform to a lower standard of conduct than the non-Catholic peoples of the North. Moreover it was during those times when Roman Catholicism held sway over the whole of Western Christendom that the great Reformation of the sixteenth century, which was above all a moral revolt, took place. It was while at Rome, the centre of Christianity, that Luther was shocked by the gross materialism and immorality of the ecclesiastical atmosphere there, and it was this glaring violation of Christian ethics that led him to deny the holiness and authority of the Roman Church. For much more serious than the undeniable subjection of the Catholic believer to the sins of unregenerate man is the fact that the Popes, the heads of the Church on earth, show numerous examples of vice and crime of the most reprehensible kinds. Some of the Vicars of Christ have obtained special notoriety by their dissolute character, and it would be hard to find a secular prince who exceeded, or even paralleled

the dark deeds of a Rodrigo Borgia.¹ If we add to this the disputes and violence that often attended the elections of Popes from as early as the third century down to the end of the Middle Ages; if we include the twenty-four papal wars of schism during that period,² and the appearance of the anti-Popes contesting the See of St. Peter, it becomes evident that the sacred nature ascribed to the Papacy by its adherents is flatly contradicted by history. This dark side of Romanism is rarely considered by Catholics in all its fatal bearings upon the claims of the Church.³

Protestantism, which by its very name proclaimed itself as a revolt against Rome, was born out of the strong repugnance with which the Catholic priesthood came to be regarded by its flocks. Manifestations of this feeling were either sternly repressed or fanned

¹ Dr. James Martineau, who sums up his indictment of the Popes by saying that "licence has seldom been carried farther than by some of the 'holy fathers' on the throne of Peter," describes concisely Rodrigo Borgia as "a Pope who quitted it by the poison-cup which he had mingled for another; who dissolved his daughter's marriage that he might wed her to a prince; who made his son a Cardinal in boyhood, and, to do so, fathered him on the husband he had wronged; who allied that son with the Orsini faction, and, when the end was gained, screened him in the betrayal and murder of its chief; while preaching a crusade against Bajazet, the Turk, bargained with him to murder his rival brother Djem, then prisoner at Rome, and won the prisoner's price." (*Seat of Authority in Religion*, p. 154.)

² Döllinger, *Studies in European History*, p. 66.

³ The Catholic writer W. S. Lilly, in *Claims of Christianity* (p. 160), admits that "there is a vast amount of testimony concerning the reality and gravity of the scandals which called for Luther's protest," and quotes Symonds, who, in his *Revival of Learning*, thinks it "almost impossible to over-estimate the moral corruption of Rome at the beginning of the sixteenth century."

into a flame by the secular rulers, and it was the attitude of the latter which finally determined whether the people remained Catholic or turned Protestant. In England, Henry VIII, although he had received from the Pope the title of Defender of the Faith, repudiated the Pope's authority from unworthy motives, and, assuming the headship of the Church of England, demanded from his subjects an undisputed recognition of his amateur theology. We find, on the other hand, that the Poles, who are now perhaps the most devoted of Catholic peoples in Europe, had become almost completely Protestant, but, principally owing to one of their kings, the Catholic counter-reformation which set in proved thoroughly successful.¹

The deep-seated dissatisfaction with Romanism which existed in the sixteenth century is abundantly proved by the wonderfully rapid spread of Protestantism from one end of Europe to another, and by the furious hatred with which the old Church was assailed by its erstwhile devotees. There is a great deal of truth in Cardinal Newman's caustic remark that the Protestant sects of Germany and Geneva "began with persecution and have ended in scepticism,"² but the pent-up feeling against the tyranny of the Roman Church, as well as the inherited traditional intolerance of Catholicism itself towards all other manifestations of religious belief, are sufficient explanations of the hatred felt by the reformers towards everything Catholic. That Catholics have nothing to complain of is evident from the merciless manner in which Protestant tendencies were suppressed by Catholics, and the attitude towards Protestantism

¹ Cf. Ranke, *ibid.*, ii. p. 142.

² *The Development of Christian Doctrine*, p. 91.

of the papal authorities in the territories under their jurisdiction. Nevertheless, it cannot be denied that persecution of the old faith is a very prominent trait of early Protestantism, and that among a certain section of Protestants intolerance is still unpleasantly conspicuous. Of course, this policy brought about its own punishment. The various sects which arose out of the Reformation often treated each other with the same bigotry which they all exhibited towards the Mother-Church of Western Europe, and the arbitrary confessions of faith which were set up by the authority of princes were regarded as standards to which all had to submit under pain of most severe punishment. Non-conformity to these creeds was treated by all manner of coercion, which was generally met by a correspondingly unflinching insistence on some particular doctrine or form of Church government. The fierce quarrels between the Lutheran and the Reformed Churches, between Episcopalianism and Presbyterianism, the Established and Free Churches in England, either show an inexcusable want of charity, or, if the differences dividing these communions be really of paramount importance, a striking testimony to the errors which they represent.

The despotism which was formerly wielded by the Catholic priesthood was continued by their Protestant successors, and liberty of conscience was as little known or respected in the new as in the old order of things. The burning of the deist Michael Servetus, of which Calvin was guilty, is a well-known incident, which may be taken as symptomatic of an ecclesiastical tyranny which, discarding the authority of the Pope, set itself up as of similar dignity and power. The worst excesses in

this direction have been committed amongst the Scotch, a people which has otherwise evinced so much intellectual vigour and progressive independence. The declaration by Buckle that "when the Scotch Kirk was at the height of its power, we may search history in vain for any institution which can compete with it, except the Spanish Inquisition," is fully borne out by his indictment of that Church.¹ The most notable feature of the Church of John Knox was its frantic hatred of Popery, which was put outside every law, human and divine, and is well characterized by the description which was given by a Scotchman of General Drummond (under James II) that he lived and died a bad Christian but a good Protestant.² It was in the same spirit that the relentless persecution of Romanism in Ireland was carried on by English Protestants, and the sufferings and heroic resistance of the Irish Catholics form one of the brightest pages in the history of their race.

While the revolt against Rome was originally due to moral causes, the ultimate result of the Reformation was a change of doctrine. In some cases these two aspects were interwoven. Thus, for instance, the sale of indulgences was carried on for the profit of the Roman hierarchy with such unblushing disregard to every religious susceptibility that the whole idea was brought into disrepute, and this traffic in the delivery of souls from purgatory was found to be utterly offensive in every respect. It was the translation of the Bible into the vernacular that worked the great radical changes in Christian doctrine. The studied neglect of the Bible

¹ Cf. Buckle, *History of Civilization*, iii. ch. iv. Cf. also Hume, *History of England*, vi. p. 575.

² Macaulay, *History of England*, ii. p. 117.

in Catholicism is a remarkable phenomenon, and contrasts rather strangely with the professed abhorrence of Jewish tradition felt by all Christian sects. The whole edifice of Romanism rests on "tradition," and among the evidences of Christianity it would be difficult to find anything more naïve than the manner in which the Church and tradition support each other. It is impossible to say on whom the burden of proof is supposed to rest. Catholicism claims that Christian tradition, as it was received from Christ and the apostles, and was developed among their disciples, is the rule of the Church, and then, when the historic contradictions, and consequent unreliability, of these traditions are pointed out, it is gravely asserted that it is the Church which alone fixes and interprets the boundaries and terms of valid tradition. While ostensibly basing itself on the Scriptures and the traditional faith and practice of orthodox Christendom, it is the Church itself which in reality is its own authority and judge. The supremacy of the Bible is indeed assumed in a general way, but this is neutralized by the alleged exemption of the Church from error, and made entirely nugatory by the rigorous prohibition of the right of private interpretation. Besides this, the Bible was always the property of the very few, and the study of it was generally discouraged. The original languages of the Bible were hardly known for the longest period of the existence of the Church, and already after Jerome (who flourished in the fifth century) the Latin Church laid aside the study of the New Testament in Greek. For 800 years, until Roger Bacon, no one felt it necessary to compare the Vulgate, the authorized Latin version, with the original Greek, and not a single copy

of the New Testament in that language could then be seen in an ecclesiastical library.¹ Hence there reigned such an extreme ignorance concerning the Bible, that even in the sixteenth century most of the Catholic priests in Scotland considered the New Testament one of Luther's compositions, and asserted that only the Old Testament contained the Holy Scriptures.² To read the Bible came in Reformation times to be regarded as a serious offence, being considered an evidence of heretical disposition, and sometimes batches of Testaments were publicly burned. With the waning of the implicit faith in the infallibility of the Roman Church, there arose a strong desire to find the lost truth in the Word of God. It was then realized how very slender was the support which the Scriptures afforded to the Catholic assumptions. It was discovered that even where the Church had apparently based itself on the authority of the Bible, the sacred text had been fearfully abused and perverted.

But it is not to be presumed that, although the Reformers professed to adopt the Scriptures as their sole rule of faith, Protestantism is in truth based on the Scriptures. For the use of the Bible for doctrinal purposes did not come as a behest from on high, but was a mere concession by the prince,³ and was only

¹ Döllinger, *Studies in European History*, p. 175.

² Hume, *History of England*, v. p. 93.

³ On the Bible in the English Church under Henry VIII, J. R. Green says: "The new foundation of religious truth was to be regarded throughout England as a gift, not from the Church, but from the king. It is Henry on his throne who gives the sacred volume to Cranmer, ere Cranmer and Cromwell can distribute it to the throng of priests and laymen below." *Short History of the English People*, p. 332. Cf. the extravagant dedication to King James in the Authorized Version of the Bible.

to be treated in the manner in which he allowed the national Church to be formulated.¹ Catholicism had practically banned the study of the Bible, and, while the reading of the Bible was always an integral part of the religious practice and worship of the Jews, this was only accorded to the Protestants as a privilege. Nor even when granted could this privilege be used by the Protestants to its full extent. The idea of private interpretation was indeed proclaimed boldly, but evidently this only held good for the authors of sects and their protectors. That the leaders of Protestantism were directly inspired by the Holy Ghost can hardly be contended even by the most enthusiastic champions of the creed, and the very numerous conflicting divisions which arose out of the Reformation testify to the arbitrary manner in which every masterful theologian gave wide scope and fundamental importance to his own particular idiosyncrasy. Once a certain system obtained official recognition, or could maintain itself by popular support, there was created a hierarchy which pretended to be the only true exponent of God's Will. Though the interpretation of the Scriptures played, of course, a very important part in the new Churches, their adherents had nevertheless to forego their right of private judgment in order to participate in the blessings of true Christianity. But since the

¹ This fact should be noted, in view of the popular Protestant boast that that creed is entirely founded on the Word of God, and the deductions of superiority over Judaism with which this assertion is accompanied. It ought also to be remembered that Judaism in the Middle Ages produced some of the ablest commentators on the Scriptures, who, by their critical and rationalistic methods, laid the foundations for the biblical writings of the Reformers and modern Christian scholars.

old Catholic idea of inspired authority could no longer be maintained, every effort has been made to confine the faithful within the area of fixed doctrines, by guiding them in the desired path with creeds, catechisms, etc.¹ Every member of the sect is then firmly convinced that, owing to his reading of the Scriptures and his perfect faith, he has found the Truth, even though he be born in it, and he is as strongly of opinion that whosoever does not accept that particular Truth will surely perish everlastingly. Protestantism has, therefore, not only split Christianity into many sects, but, by the fictitious grant of private judgment in the interpretation of the Bible, has practically invested every one of its adherents with the arrogance of an infallible Pope.

If the rank and file of Protestantism drew their infallible inspiration from the teachings of the leaders of the Reformation, these, in their turn, depended on the early Catholic Church, and not directly on the Bible. It is, of course, assumed that only those doc-

¹ This policy of Protestant sects regarding the Bible has been pointed out by Dr. Martineau, who says: "But do you suppose this Book will be trusted to go by itself among the people? It would be a great mistake. Preachers will go before it, and tell them what they are to find in it, and ask them if they have found it. If not, intimations are given that they had better look again; and while the search is going on, a clamour, as of a multitude, is kept up. On the one side, a chorus of sweet promises announces all tempting things in earth and heaven to him that finds the pearl; on the other, a discord of ill names and insults, and horrors, and holy condolences and assurances of absolute perdition, to him that misses it. All these oral notes are exceedingly effective; they are as powerful, without being quite so barefaced, as the ingenious pretensions to infallibility. . . . With all their boasting, not a book exists of which Protestants are so afraid as the Bible." (*The Rationale of Religious Inquiry*, p. 39.)

trines were retained which agreed with, or did not oppose, the Scriptures, but it is just here that the light fails ; for it was the Catholic Church which fixed the Canon of the Scriptures, as far as possible in the interests of that communion. The Protestant is thereby obliged to recognize as the basis of his faith the supposed inspiration and authority of a corrupt Church, the good faith and right judgment of which he disputes—a paradox which is equalled by the fact that Christianity has to accept the inspiration of the Canon of the Old Testament Scriptures as fixed by the much-abused Jewish Rabbis and Scribes.

But the Reformers stopped short wherever in their wisdom they thought fit, and adopted the views of the Catholic Church on questions of doctrine of which only a germ could be discovered in the Scriptures. The sacraments of Baptism and of the Eucharist were taken over and embellished with such further speculative notions as were deemed to conform to the beliefs of the primitive Church ; the fall of man and his redemption were adopted from the Church Fathers, and incorporated with various alterations in the newly-fashioned creeds. While the authority of the Church Fathers was repudiated, many of their extra-biblical doctrines were firmly embodied into the beliefs of the Protestant sects, and placed in a position of supreme importance, apparently as a set-off against the discarded Catholic dogmas. The questions of the origin of evil, predestination, grace, free-will, justification, the nature of the Eucharist, the form of Church government, etc., were thrown up and debated by rival theologians with the greatest ardour, and, in view of the proclamation of the right of private judgment, every Protestant dis-

cussed and defended the particular tenet distinguishing his sect with as much zeal and self-assumed authority as the original founder of that confession himself. The Catholic, who ordinarily felt so sure of his faith and salvation by implicitly relying on Holy Mother Church, was now placed in the difficult position of being confronted by the most abstruse of abstract ideas, which, to the Protestant mind, were of the highest possible importance to eternal happiness or misery.¹ This state of things gave rise to a large number of the most diverse and conflicting doctrines, most of which became crystallized into separate Churches, each at war with its rivals. In addition to this, there have continually taken place constant secessions from the main bodies, so that at the present day the Protestant section of Christianity is divided into innumerable divisions, representing so many claims to infallible truth.

Romanism itself, on the other hand, has also never been more than a section of Christianity, and this fact is not altered by the self-centred claim of being the only true and legitimate Church of Christ. The Roman Church has adopted the practice of shutting out from its communion all those who in any way differ from it, but this is not necessarily decisive in so far as Christianity as a whole is concerned.

Thus the great Greek Church, in its turn, regards Romanism itself as having departed from the right

¹ Referring to the ideas entertained by Protestants at the time of Edward VI (1547) regarding grace and justification by faith, Hume says: "The meanest Protestant imagined, at the time, that he had a full comprehension of all those mysterious doctrines, and he heartily despised the most learned and knowing person of the ancient religion, who acknowledged his ignorance with regard to them." (*History of England*, v. p. 89.)

faith. The Greek Church is the ecclesiastical body which, more than any other part of Christendom, built up the Catholic faith. The original language of the Gospels and other documents of the early Church is Greek, and at the General Councils, particularly at Nice, the most important of them, the Greeks formed the largest and most influential element. The Greeks have been very conservative in their beliefs and practices, and it was the Roman branch, they claim, which, by the unjustified introduction of the *filioque* ("from the Son") turned schismatic. The Romish innovations, of which the unwarrantable assumption of the Bishop of Rome's pre-eminence and infallibility is the most glaring, aggravate the offence, and, by these and other wilful acts, Romanism placed itself outside the boundaries of the One and Indivisible Church. This opinion, which is a cardinal point in the creed of over 100 million souls, in the most ancient of existing Churches, deserves at least recognition, and it must be noted that Protestants, like the High Church Anglicans, who set much store on traditional Christianity, agree largely with this claim of the Greek against the Latin Church. Nor, like the Armenian, Coptic and other Oriental Churches, is the Greek Church, allied as it is with the Russian power, a negligible quantity in the religious or political spheres. The most numerous secession that has taken place from Roman Catholicism since the Reformation is the return in the nineteenth century of about two millions of Uniates to the Greek Orthodox Church, to which they had formerly belonged.

It would be unprofitable to forecast the future of the various Christian confessions, but, though it is evident that their position towards each other as religious bodies

is still as uncompromising as ever, there are various extraneous forces which are bound to influence their developments. The Greek and Oriental Churches are most immune from the ravages of time, but in Russia, where the State religion has always been the faithful adjunct of a barbarous autocracy, indifferentism and Voltaireanism have become typical features of the educated classes, while the masses are largely imbued with dissenting views. A successful political revolution in that country might also produce in time a religious convulsion, when a crass anti-clerical atheism would become the dominant tone of the *intelligenza*, and a wild variety of superstition would spread among the peasantry and the industrial proletariat. Roman Catholicism is particularly troubled by those who were once its most reliable supports. Italy, the home of the Papacy, is now hostile to it, and has forcibly appropriated the "patrimony of St. Peter," while Rome has become the capital of an anti-Papal Power. France, formerly the eldest daughter of the Church, has, of her own accord, repudiated the honour and privileges of that title, and has severed even its official tie with Catholicism. Spain, the most Catholic of nations, is deeply imbued with anti-Catholic feeling, and has sunk, together with her national Church, into a state of degradation. In the home of Roman Catholicism, in all the Latin countries, whether in Europe or America, the intellectual classes are mostly given over to rationalism and contempt of the Church, while the pronounced attitude of the intelligent working classes is a strong leaning towards irreligion, crystallized by the growing labour movements into a hatred of the Church, which is regarded by them as the great symbol of reaction

in all fields of human life and thought. In Germany, Austria-Hungary and Russia, Catholicism has to fight for the existence of its rights and privileges, but in Anglo-Saxon countries, where liberty of conscience is firmly established, the Roman Church has gained respect for its moderation. The increase of its numbers there has not come about so much by conversions as by the large influx of Irish and other Catholics from the European Continent. The converts to Romanism are more than counterbalanced by the losses, which are rarely referred to by the faithful, though the leakages in the larger towns of England and America are very considerable.

Protestantism is the vanguard of Christian progress, and embraces the most vigorous of European peoples. Owing largely to a notable absence of a domineering and grasping sacerdotal caste, and the gradual recognition of the demands of the times, the Protestant Churches have still to a very great extent retained their hold upon their adherents. There is, however, taking place an evolution within their midst. The Reformers, in their examination of the Christian faith, as it was transmitted to them by the Church of Rome, omitted to investigate the historical value of the New Testament records regarding Jesus, as well as the attitude of the apostles and primitive Christians towards his teachings. The great achievement of the Reformation was not its doctrinal changes, but its revolt against the tyranny of Rome, and it was reserved for a later age, better endowed with the means and freedom of research and criticism, to complete what was left undone in the sixteenth century. It is no exaggeration to say that the labours of German theologians, whose authority is being recognized in all scholarly Protestant

circles, have proved disastrous to the traditional teachings of Protestantism regarding Christ and Christian dogma. The victorious advance of the conclusions of natural science has helped much to discredit the belief in the mysteries and miracles which form the groundwork of Christian faith. It is only necessary to read the proceedings of Church Congresses to find, on the authority of the highest Church dignitaries, that what was the heterodoxy of yesterday is the orthodoxy of to-day.

The growing weakness of Roman Catholicism as a political power, and the prevailing indifference, have lessened the former animosity between the two chief sections of Western Christendom, but, as a proselytizing agency among the Catholics, Protestantism has shown itself a complete failure. To the believing Catholic, Protestantism lacks the historic sense, while to those who have thrown the dogma of the Catholic Church overboard, Protestantism appears only a feeble imitation of it, satisfying neither the heart nor the head. The great struggle for the future is no longer between Romanism and Protestantism, but between the unquestioning faith of Catholicism, the true bulwark of traditional Christianity, and the critical spirit of Rationalism.¹

¹ On this point I may be permitted to quote the authoritative opinion of Mr. Lecky, who, referring to the fact that in the nineteenth century dissatisfied Roman Catholics have ceased to turn to the other Christian sects, says: "Of the many hundreds of great thinkers and writers, in every department, who have separated themselves from the teachings and practices of Catholicism, it would be difficult to name three men of real eminence and unquestionable sincerity, who have attached themselves permanently to any of the more conservative forms of Protestantism. Amid all those great semi-religious revolutions which have unhinged the faith of thousands and have so profoundly altered

In the historic evolution of Christianity there is presented the important fact, and one which must not be overlooked, that what divided one Church from another were not matters concerning the ethical advancement or the happiness of mankind, but merely questions of dogma or ecclesiastical discipline. The sacraments and doctrines of Christianity, instead of uniting the faithful, proved the causes of their division. The long and fierce quarrel between the Arians and the Trinitarians, fittingly named Homoiousians and Homoousians in ecclesiastical parlance, is unintelligible to the vast mass of mankind; the great schism between Western and Eastern Christendom was brought about by the insertion in the creed of the one word *filioque*; the fundamental cause of the irreconcilable dispute between the Lutheran and Reformed Protestants was their differing views on the nature of the Eucharist—a subject of complete mystery. As the prophets of Judaism had a passion for righteousness in conduct, so the leaders of Christianity may be said to have had a passion for orthodoxy in faith.

Of the greatest significance is the steady trend of Christianity towards the ideals of Judaism. That this

the relations of Catholicism and society, Protestant Churches have made no advance and have exercised no perceptible influence. . . . Scarcely ever before had so large a proportion of the literature of Europe exhibited an open hostility or a contemptuous indifference towards Catholicism. . . . But while Catholicism has thus been convulsed and agitated to its very basis, while the signs of its disintegration are crowding upon us on every side . . . the Protestant sects have gained nothing by the decay of their ancient rival. . . . Whatever is lost by Catholicism is gained by Rationalism, wherever the spirit of Rationalism recedes, the spirit of Catholicism advances." (*History of Rationalism*, i. pp. 171, 172.)

is entirely unconscious, does not alter the fact. When the Reformers rebelled against the Roman Church by rejecting the doctrine of apostolic succession, monasticism, the celibacy of the clergy, the invocation of saints, and other similar teachings and practices, Protestantism departed from historic Christianity. But by thus breaking the continuity of Christian tradition, Protestantism involuntarily rendered an immeasurable service to the conscience and intellect of modern times. It is the good fortune of Judaism that it has never been burdened with those features from which Protestantism and Rationalism have had to free themselves at such a tremendous cost of energy and blood. The struggles of the liberal Christian and the revolt of the Rationalist against all forms of Christianity are concentrated on dogmas like the Trinity, the divinity of Christ, the sacraments, the fall of man, original sin, justification and redemption, and it is merely an historical fact that, from the birth of Christianity till the present day, Judaism has uncompromisingly protested against these doctrines as perversions of truth, and as prejudicial to our highest moral and social interests.

CHAPTER XI

THE SCHEME OF SALVATION

“ He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good ; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God ? ”—*Micah* vi. 8.

ALL sections of Christianity, with very few and unimportant exceptions, possess a strongly developed and well-defined theological system. The ground work of this is supplied by the recorded utterances of Jesus and his apostles, particularly those of Paul, in regard to the origin and destiny of the human race, and the views held by the dominant party among the early Christians have defined the interpretations subsequently given to it by the body of believers.

The so-called scheme of salvation, which forms the centre of Christian theology and represents the motive power of Christian life and faith, consists of a drama which began with Adam and ended with Jesus Christ. The details have received varied explanations, and though the latter are considered in themselves as of the greatest importance, the plot may be set out substantially as follows :—

Adam, the first man, was created by God perfect, free from evil, moral and physical, and also immortal. He and his wife Eve sinned, however, by disobeying God's Will in eating of the forbidden fruit of the Tree of

Knowledge. This roused the wrath of God, who cursed Adam and Eve, and not only them, but all their descendants for ever. Henceforth man suffered this curse, but it was ordained that the race would be redeemed by a descendant of Adam, who should bring back the lost innocence and immortality, and restore humanity to the same paradisaical state in which it had found itself before its fall. In order to carry out this scheme of salvation, God revealed Himself to the world through the medium of the Jewish people, and He then sent His only-begotten Son, who expiated on the cross the sins of all mankind. Every one who believes in Christ as the Son of God and in the efficacy of his death as an atonement for all sin, will be redeemed in this world and the next, but those who do not believe this, still live under the curse of Adam and will suffer eternal punishment hereafter.

This Christian philosophy of history is not merely a speculative system to be received or rejected at will, but is an integral part of the Christian faith. Whatever embellishments or accretions may have been added, the story of man from his fall to his redemption in the manner just set out is the framework of the Christian religion.

The fall of man, which necessitated the scheme of salvation, is a doctrine which has always been regarded as one of the premises which go conclusively to prove the truth of Christianity. That through the sin of Adam all his descendants lost those spiritual and physical blessings which were possessed by the first human pair, is claimed by every Christian confession, but in what manner and to what extent fallen man has suffered by the disobedience of his first parents is a matter of differ-

ence. It is generally assumed that man has lost the original righteousness possessed by Adam before the fall, and, as inclined to evil, deserves God's wrath and damnation.¹ Original sin is held by the Lutheran and Reformed Churches to consist in evil concupiscence (Romanism holding that this is not sin in itself, but only leading to it), and most Christian communions agree that man is condemned in the sight of God even before he actually commits sin ; the Greek and Roman Catholics admit that man in his natural state is not altogether bereft of the power to do good, while the Protestant confessions generally claim that he is "utterly indisposed, disabled and made opposite to all good and wholly inclined to all evil."² The Christian doctrine of the fall of man is based on the third chapter of Genesis, which relates how the serpent incited the woman to eat of the forbidden fruit of the Tree of Knowledge and how the man was led astray by her. The serpent was cursed for his deception of the woman, and her seed that, according to the promise, was to bruise his head, is assumed by Christian interpreters to refer to Christ, who would undo the work of the serpent ; the latter is taken as typifying the devil, though this is invalidated by the words, "thou shalt bruise his heel," addressed to the serpent. Woman was henceforth to be subjected to the pangs of child-birth, and man was to eat his bread by the sweat of his brow, while both were to suffer the penalty of death.

In utilizing the Biblical story of the expulsion of Adam and Eve from the Garden of Eden for the purpose of a scheme of salvation, Paul committed a gross per-

¹ Thirty-Nine Articles, Art. 9.

² Westminster Confession, vi. 23.

version of the truth of every man's original state of innocence and subsequent weakness and tendency to sin. In order to emphasize the necessity for redemption by Jesus, Paul laid particular stress on the inextinguishable sin of Adam, and of the unbroken effect this was to have on all generations of mankind. This thought has been formulated by Christian theologians, who maintain that man is absolutely incapable of raising himself towards a higher life unless aided by the saving power of Jesus. Many hold it as a matter of faith that even the best acts of man are in themselves only grievous sins in the sight of God.

Since all men are considered entirely corrupt in their nature by reason of the sin inherited by them from Adam, they are all condemned to eternal damnation in hell. Even new-born children, although admittedly without knowledge of right and wrong, and, therefore, incapable of committing any culpable transgression, are, on account of the original sin transmitted to them, condemned to everlasting punishment, so that, according to the expressive assurance of an authority, there are babes not a span long creeping along the floor of hell. Hence the assured necessity for infant baptism, which is altogether without a Scriptural basis, and really opposed to the original idea of baptism, which was only administered to adults and was part of the act of repentance. It is stupefying to contemplate the horrible and callous cruelty which consigns practically the whole of the human race before Jesus, and the overwhelming majority of it after him, to the most excruciating pains and tortures the heated imagination of the religious fanatic could devise for his opponents. Yet this belief in the endless torments of hell may be said without

exaggeration to constitute for many the motive power of Christian faith. Intimately bound up with the fall of man, the belief in hell has provided from early times to the present day a congenial theme to gloat upon, as well as a fruitful incentive and powerful whip for the spread of the Christian religion. Some of the Church Fathers have left graphic descriptions of the scenes in the place of punishment in which their theological enemies were doomed to spend eternity, and Tertullian particularly distinguished himself by the remarkable fury with which he revelled in the agonies which the pagans would have to undergo in hell. These views always held their prominent place, not merely in the faith of the masses, but many spiritually-minded Catholics even to-day consider it a duty to meditate on the realities of hell. The Protestant Churches have also been noted for their fervent belief in hell, and the achievement of the Calvinists, especially in Scotland, in this regard is something extraordinary. It was often the most popular theme on which preachers could expatiate, and this curious fact is still evident in the discourses of the revivalist preachers of the present day, by whom the idea of hell seems to be regarded as the sole impelling force of all Christian faith and virtue. Christianity thus loads man with an unbearable burden of imaginary guilt and, after reducing him to an imaginary impotence, threatens with the tortures of an imaginary hell, unless he implicitly accepts the conditions laid down by the Church. That this method has served its purpose well is testified by the history of Christianity, but these doctrines were created by the same genius which made the power of the priest supreme by confining to him exclusively all the means of approach

to God. By weakening the authority of the sacerdotal caste, Protestantism has deprived itself of unity, but it maintains itself largely by the iron grip of the dogma of the fall of man and all that it entails. The fall of man, as interpreted in Christian theology, is as degrading to man as it is dishonouring to God. By it the very generation of the human body is poisoned, by being regarded in itself as the greatest offence possible, one which cannot be repaired or expiated. Independently of his own will, every man is brought into the world, and, without any consciousness on his part, he is burdened with an unbearable load of sin, for which he will have to suffer unspeakable agonies throughout all eternity. Through endless ages the race is punished for an act committed by its first parents, and it is solemnly and unequivocally asserted that there are no means of relief from this awful doom except by joining a certain creed or sect, itself the creation of yesterday, and unknown to, or repudiated by, the vast majority of mankind. That such a doctrine should be preached and believed by men whose sincerity and goodness of heart are incontestable, is one of the glaring anomalies of religious life, but that God should be made party to it is a blasphemy. There is nothing said in the Christian faith to mitigate in the slightest degree Adam's disobedience, or the reputed guilt of his descendants, though God, in creating the first man, could have made him proof against the temptation of another of His creatures, and, owing to the inherent weakness of man, God should in justice have forgiven what in subsequent generations man was entirely innocent of. But in the Christian story God is represented as having poured out his wrath on all without distinction, and this burning anger could

only be appeased by the sacrifice of His Son, who himself had been born in a supernatural manner, in order to escape the taint of original sin. Instead of setting out God's merciful dealings with the children of men, the Christian scheme of salvation is an indictment against Him.

Appalled by this view of the relations of God to man, a considerable and ever-increasing number of Christian theologians are repudiating what has hitherto been considered as the basis of the Faith. The idea that all those outside a certain sect, or even outside Christianity, shall be subjected to everlasting torments, has particularly shocked the sense of justice of many Christians. In spite of the reputed declaration of Jesus: "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, and he that believeth not shall be damned," strong efforts are made in Protestant Churches to do away with this objectionable teaching, though the official view in almost all confessions is still the old formula that without the Church there is no salvation.¹ The dogma of the fall of man is retained with still greater tenacity, though it has also had to give way before a more generous estimate of human nature and a higher conception of God. Apart from the revolting moral aspect of the doctrine, it is granted that the story of Adam does not offer any ground for the assumptions of the fall, while there is a growing mass of opinion that the account of the creation given in Genesis ought not to be taken in a literal sense. This view is strengthened by the fact

¹ As a concession to some of those who are not fortunate enough to belong to their sect, Christian theologians have, in a generous mood, discovered the existence of "uncovenanted mercies," or admitted the plea of "invincible ignorance."

that there is a counterpart of the biblical narrative of the temptation by the serpent, the forbidden fruit and expulsion from paradise, to be found in the ancient Babylonian mythology, not to speak of the theory of evolution, according to which, instead of the alleged fall of man, it is claimed that there has been a constant elevation of man to a higher moral and spiritual level, and that death, far from being a special curse against Adam and his descendants, is nothing more than a universal law of nature.

Of course, since the whole system of Christian theology is comprised in the declaration of Paul: "As in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive,"¹ the abandonment of the idea of the fall of man shakes Christianity to its foundations. For if there was no Adam and no fall of man, there was no special need for Jesus and his redemption of the human race.

The centre of gravity has, therefore, been transferred to the work of Jesus, as the Saviour of mankind from sin and error. It was he, it is claimed, who by his death satisfied the justice of God by undergoing the penalty which should have been inflicted on every one born of woman. Like the doctrine of the fall of man, the idea of his redemption is beset with insuperable difficulties. Both dogmas presuppose the unspeakable wrath of the All-Merciful, and the hopelessly corrupt condition of His noblest work. An impassable gulf and implacable enmity are assumed to exist between the Creator and the creatures He has brought into being. The relations that are considered to prevail between humanity and God the Father are not only regulated according to the most uncompromising legal standard,

¹ 1 Cor. xv. 22.

but in this instance the rights and claims of the Judge are adjudged and enforced by Himself with the greatest severity. But since man, owing to his innate sinfulness, is unable to give full satisfaction, it was necessary that one who was one of the human race, and yet more than a man, should make the atonement in order to pay the debt due to God. A victim was demanded, but neither the ancient sacrifice of an animal, nor even that of a human being, could satisfy the outraged honour of God. Therefore, the Son of God became man, was born of a virgin, lived without sin, and died as a perfect sacrifice to the justice of God. Then only could the Lord forgive the human race.

In this teaching, the idea of the absolute necessity of sacrifices plays a very important part. In the Epistle to the Hebrews, there is a laboured attempt to show that in the crucifixion Christ was a sacrifice, like one offered up at the Temple at Jerusalem, only that the death of the Son of God was an immolation of such transcendent superiority over every possible sacrifice that he by his death atoned once for all for the sins of the whole human race, and so rendered all further sacrifices superfluous and useless. What led to this reasoning is the fundamental assumption that "without blood there can be no remission of sin," and that the means by which God could be reconciled was not a godly life, self-sacrifice for the good of others, but by shedding the blood of some animal for the expiation of men's sins. The institution of sacrifices was indeed the chief part of the Temple service, and the regulations in connexion therewith occupy a large proportion of ancient Jewish ritualism, but it is a woeful misconception of the religion of the Hebrew Scriptures

and a travesty of Judaism to assume, as was done by Paul, that the sacrificial system is the only means to obtain the forgiveness of sin and reconciliation with God. Taking even the strictest possible Christian point of view, where it is admitted that the Old Dispensation, until the death of Jesus, provided for the salvation of its adherents, there is the incontrovertible fact that during the whole of the Babylonian Captivity, when the sacrificial system could not be carried out, the Israelites, with Jeremiah and other prophets at their head, were deprived of the sole medium by which their sins could presumably be atoned. Critical observers, and all those who choose to use their own eyes, instead of the spectacles provided by Paul, can easily convince themselves of the superficial part which the sacrificial system played in Judaism. The sacrifice of an animal to please the deity, or to turn away his supposed wrath, was a very ancient and widely prevalent custom. It involved a financial sacrifice which betokened the reality of the feeling of gratitude or penance, while the slaughter of animals for the benefit of the gods led their worshippers to regard the act as a tangible expression of devotion, meriting in its turn the favour of the higher powers. Sometimes the immolation of a mere animal was not considered sufficient, and, in order to heighten the effect, there arose the custom of sacrificing human beings. It was the glory of Judaism to have considered human sacrifices a capital offence. The idea of the atoning power of animal sacrifices prevailed also among the ancient Israelites, but very strenuous efforts were made to reduce the act to a minimum by confining it to one place only, so that any transgression of this salutary rule by their kings was always noted as a most deplorable

weakness. Whilst the priestly class had naturally a high view of the importance of the Temple service, the prophets and psalmists often pronounced themselves emphatically against this ritualistic tendency. In the opinion of the latter, God does not want sacrifices, but that His voice should be obeyed.¹ Isaiah exclaims indignantly: "To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices unto me? saith the Lord; I am full of the burnt offerings of rams and the fat of fed beasts; and I delight not in the blood of bullocks or of lambs or of goats."² The absurdity of attempting to reconcile God by the mere offering of sacrifices, and the more acceptable way of approaching Him, are thus pointed out: "For every beast of the forest is Mine, and the cattle upon a thousand hills. I know all the fowls of the mountains: and the wild beasts of the field are Mine. If I were hungry, I would not tell thee: for the world is Mine and the fulness thereof. Will I eat the flesh of bulls or drink the blood of goats? Offer unto God the sacrifice of thanksgiving and pay thy vows unto the Most High: And call upon Me in the day of trouble; I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify Me."³ But there was no deep-seated antagonism between the spiritual and ceremonial elements of the religion, for some of the noblest psalms are those which owe their composition to the services in the Temple, while it is only those who had clean hands and a pure heart who were considered worthy to stand in the holy place.⁴ The tragic end of Jewish independence, of

¹ 1 Sam. xv. 22: "And Samuel said, Hath the Lord as great delight in burnt-offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams." Cf. also Hosea vi. 6.

² i. 11.

³ Ps. l. 10-15.

⁴ Ps. xxiv.

which the magnificent Temple on Mount Zion was the proud embodiment, turned the destruction of the revered central Sanctuary into the symbol of the greatest calamity that has befallen the Jewish people. Hence the repeated prayers in the Jewish liturgy for the rebuilding of the Temple and the restoration of its services. But in all this there is not by any means the assumption that sacrifices are indispensable for the forgiveness of sin. The Jewish attitude towards sacrifices is at the present day what it was at the time of the royal psalmist, when he said: "Thou desirest no sacrifice, else would I give it: Thou delightest not in burnt offerings. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, Thou wilt not despise."¹ It is in connexion with the institution of sacrifices that the complementary character of the spiritual and ceremonial elements of Judaism, or the Jewish spiritualization of the ceremonial, are most strikingly exemplified. One of the purely ritualistic sections of the Torah, **פרשת צו**,² dealing entirely with sacrificial ordinances, has received from the Rabbis a prophetic lesson, in which Jeremiah boldly declares: "I spake not unto your fathers, nor commanded them in the day that I brought them out of the land of Egypt, concerning burnt offerings or sacrifices. But this thing commanded I them, saying, Obey My voice, and I will be your God, and ye shall be My people."³

From the foregoing utterances, from the fact that a great prophet like Jeremiah even set aside the divine origin and the necessity of the sacrificial system, and that this lesson was purposely ordained by the ancient Rabbinical authorities to be publicly read in the syna-

¹ Ps. li. 16, 17.

² Lev. vi.-viii.

³ vii. 22, 23.

gogues, it must be patent that sacrifices are of quite inferior importance in Judaism, and were so regarded also in pre-Christian times. The doctrine that only blood can cleanse mankind from its sins is, therefore, purely Christian, and the magic power imputed to the blood of Jesus in that respect shows how profoundly this idea has entered into the Christian consciousness.

The condition essential to participation in the merits of the sacrifice of Jesus is to recognize the total depravity of man, his absolute inability to do anything himself to deserve God's pardon, and the unreserved acknowledgment that redemption must be entirely due to the blood of Christ. The Christian confessions are, however, strongly divided on the various questions as to the extent of the atonement produced by Christ's death and as to the mode in which this is effected. It is certainly a noteworthy fact that in these matters the teachings of the Catholic Church are more liberal than those in vogue among the Protestant sects. While Catholicism naturally lays much stress on the Christian doctrine of original sin, it is admitted that there is a divine spark in natural man, which can be fanned by the Holy Ghost into spiritual regeneration. But the Lutheran and Calvinist Churches maintain that man has in himself not the slightest power whatever to seek regeneration, and that this must be completely carried out by the Holy Ghost, whereby man becomes merely the passive object, not the active subject, of his own salvation. In addition to this, one of the most prominent doctrines of the Reformed creed is the belief that God has already decreed beforehand who are to be saved, and that not only are all others absolutely excluded, but the elect can never, even if

they had committed the greatest sin, fall again into a state of perdition.¹ As man is thus deprived of his freedom to deserve or forfeit salvation, he is placed beyond the possibility or necessity of assisting in his own ultimate fate, which has already been unalterably fixed for him at the beginning of time. The same reasoning which is used in the case of the redemption of man is also adopted in the doctrine of predestination ; those who are saved owe this to the merits of Christ, while those who are condemned have received their just punishment. Here again God is either credited with arbitrary love or blind hatred, but of pure justice there is none. It is not considered that one man ought not to be eternally punished for what he is not responsible or even, with the best will, cannot change, since his fate has already been decreed for him beforehand by a superior power, while his fellow will receive eternal life without any merit or effort on his part. The determination with which Calvin and his followers maintained the theory of predestination was, however, strongly opposed by the theologians of rival sects. They would touch as little as possible the traditional views on redemption, but they could not admit Calvin's pitiless logic in his own conclusions from the words of Scripture, the ultimate Protestant test to which he appealed. Certainly, it cannot be gainsaid that the doctrine of predestination can well be based on the utterances of Jesus and Paul. The words of Jesus :

¹ It is related of Cromwell that, feeling his end nearing, he asked one of his preachers if the doctrine were true that the elect could never fall or suffer a final reprobation. " Nothing more certain," was the reply. " Then I am safe," said Cromwell, " for I am sure that once I was in a state of grace." Hume, *History of England*, viii. p. 238.

“ All that the Father hath given to me shall come to me ” ; “ No man can come to me, except the Father which sent me draw him ” ; “ Ye believe not because ye are not of my sheep,” are of the same import as his prayer : “ I have manifested Thy name unto the men which Thou gavest me out of the world ; Thine they were and Thou gavest them to me. I pray for them, I pray not for the world, but for them which Thou hast given me, for they are Thine.”¹ Many views of Paul, especially in the ninth chapter to the Romans, are of the same tendency, culminating in the argument : “ What if God, willing to show His wrath and to make His power known, endured with much long-suffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction : and that He might make known the riches of His glory on the vessels of mercy which He had aforetime prepared unto glory, even us whom He also called ? ”²

Nor is it agreed as to how man can attain eternal salvation. True, all Christian Churches have uncompromisingly maintained that faith (of course, the true form of faith) is the preliminary step to salvation, but it is considered a most important question whether this is sufficient, or whether it must also be accompanied by good works. The teachings of Paul on the point are clear, for he stands out as the champion of the Gospel against the Law, of faith against works, and his philosophy is summed up in the declaration : “ Now, to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt. But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness.”³ But while the ideas of

¹ John xvii. 6-10.

² Rom. ix. 22-24.

³ Rom. iv. 4, 5.

Paul became dominant in the Church in so far as regards his opposition to the Jewish Law, his theory of the uselessness of works proved quite untenable in practice. Not only did the vaunted freedom from sin fail utterly, but there was no heed paid to the denunciation of the evil effects of works, for the Church soon commenced to add sacrament to sacrament and ceremony to ceremony, while the mere profession of faith, without an accompanying evidence of ritual and works, came to be regarded by Catholicism as dead. It was asserted that faith, far from being the end, was only a means to it, and that mere faith was not by which man was justified, but that it gave him the power to act righteously. When the tenets of Christianity, however, underwent a revision at the time of the Reformation, and people came to the Scriptures with fresh minds, it was found that the Catholic conception of justification was by no means according to the idea of Paul. As in his day, so now, it was asserted that only faith in the merits of Christ was the beginning and end of a life pleasing to God. The Reformers were so sincere in maintaining this doctrine that, like some of the early Christians, sin had in a sense become non-existent for them, the faith of the Christian being considered superior in its power to any failings to which he may be subject. Luther's view is thus stated by him: "Now, you see how rich the Christian is: even if he wishes he cannot lose his salvation however great his sins may be, unless he does not desire to believe. No sin can damn him, except want of faith."¹ Sometimes, this clamour for the efficacy of mere belief produced a paradoxical passion which condemned all efforts at doing good. **II.**

¹ Quoted by Möhler, *Symbolik*, p. 163.

a letter to the Reformer Melanchthon, Luther writes to him in these extraordinary terms: "Sin more strongly, but be stronger in faith and rejoice in Christ, who is the victor of sin, death, and the world. We must sin, as long as we are here. . . . It is enough if through the riches of God's glory we recognize the Lamb of God which taketh away the sins of the world; from him sin will not tear us away even if thousands upon thousands of times daily we commit fornication or murder."¹ The effect of such teachings occasionally produced disastrous results, and, like Paul, Luther had to recall that the freedom he had in mind was not an abandonment of all moral restraints. There can surely be no legitimate doubt as to the high motives of the great Reformer, or of those of his fellow-labourers in the purification of the Church, but their doctrine of justification by faith only remained a mere theological shibboleth, while, in practice, common sense and the exigencies of life urged that, independently of the belief in certain dogmatic formulas, there should be an earnest striving for those good works which were in theory condemned as dead.

Still, in spite of the recognized necessity for good works, it is an active belief in all the teachings of the Church that is really considered the sole medium by which men can be reconciled to God. In a manner, man has to do little more than to give his assent to certain theories, but, to confirm these, there have been introduced a number of ceremonies, called sacraments, which are likewise considered as absolutely essential to his regeneration in this world and salvation in the next. The fact that the two principal sacraments,

¹ Cf. Möhler, *Symbolik*, p. 163, note 2.

Baptism and the Lord's Supper, are universal throughout Christendom, is a sufficient indication that the Church cannot dispense with external signs.

It is known with what untiring vigour Paul attacked the institution of the Abrahamic covenant in Judaism, and the repudiation by Christians of this rite is considered by them as a triumph of spirituality. Christian theologians regard it as a proof of the inferiority of Judaism that those who wish to enter its fold have to submit to circumcision. It should be noted, however, that since Judaism does not consider adherence to its faith and customs as necessary to the salvation of Gentiles, there is no call for them to submit to the Jewish rite of initiation, so much so that even the "proselytes of the gate," who stood in close relations to Judaism, did not require to undergo circumcision. It is, therefore, difficult to see how Judaism can be reproached with narrowness, because it demands the test of circumcision of those who want to enter within its pale, nor is it evident what advance upon it there is in the Christian act of Baptism, which alone grants entrance to the Kingdom of God, while all those who have not been regularly baptized are absolutely excluded from it. Baptism is not merely a visible sign of membership of the Church, but it is supposed to be in itself *the* mark of regeneration and of the remission of sin, as well as a means of salvation. Even new-born babes must have baptism administered to them, as, on account of their original sin, they are in danger of eternal damnation if death should overtake them. The baptism of infants has been retained in full force among Protestants, though the practice has neither apostolic authority, nor can it be made to fit in with the Protestant idea

that conscious faith can alone secure justification. The exorcism and the renunciation of the devil that form part of the ceremony of Baptism in the Roman Catholic Church turn the act into a deliverance of the human soul from demoniacal powers.

Of equal importance with Baptism is the Lord's Supper, both of which are supposed to have been ordained by Jesus. Of all the forms of belief with which the Christian creed has burdened itself, nothing surpasses in boldness the idea associated with the Lord's Supper. It is one of the most cherished doctrines of the Christian faith that every believer must, as a sign of his membership of the Church, and as an indispensable means of salvation, eat the flesh and drink the blood of his Redeemer. The Roman Catholic Church teaches further that it is in the power of every one belonging to the sacerdotal order to transform bread and wine into the actual flesh and blood of Jesus, and it is one of the most distinctive dogmas of that Communion that in every celebration of the Mass the priest offers to God the body of Christ as a veritable expiatory sacrifice for the living and the dead, the act of redemption, as it was carried out by Christ on the cross, being thus repeated on innumerable occasions at the will of the officiating priest. The nature of the miracle performed in the Lord's Supper is so stupendous, and the power with which the priest is credited so unparalleled, that there can be no question of any examination or criticism of either the Catholic or the Protestant conception of the rite, and the faith in the reality of the personal presence of Christ in the Eucharist must be entirely left to the individual conscience.

The sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper

show in a striking manner the radical difference between Jewish and Christian ceremonialism. Christian baptism is based on the rabbinical rite of טבילה, which is still administered to proselytes to Judaism on their admission. In Judaism this act of immersion in water is merely a symbol of purification and holiness of life, but in Christianity Baptism was turned into a magical ordinance and an initial step to ensure salvation. The Lord's Supper furnishes an instance of the fundamental importance attached in Christianity to an external sign and to the remarkable materialization of the spiritual. The idea of the substance of a god-man being actually present in bread and wine, and the declaration that eternal life can only be obtained by eating and drinking his flesh and blood, is surely quite inconsistent with that higher religious conception claimed by Christianity, and is absolutely inconceivable in connexion with Judaism.¹

¹ The original form of the Lord's Supper was known before the existence of Christianity. Cf. Karl Hase, *Theol. Akad. Lehrschriften*, iii. p. 449. In regard to the idea embodied in the Lord's Supper, I venture to quote the following description by Herbert Spencer of funeral rites practised by certain uncivilized races: "In some cases parts of the dead are swallowed by the living, who seek thus to inspire themselves with the good qualities of the dead, and . . . the dead are supposed to be thereby honoured. The implied notion was shown to be associated with the notion that the nature of another being, inhering in all fragments of his body, inheres, too, in the unconsumed part of anything incorporated with his body; and with the further notion that between those who swallow different parts of the same food, some community of nature is established. Hence such beliefs as that ascribed by Bastian to certain negroes who think that on eating and drinking consecrated food they eat and drink the god himself. . . . Mendieta, describing a ceremony used by the Aztecs, says: they had also a sort of communion. . . . They

Not only is the Scriptural authority on which the Lord's Supper is based very vague and dubious,¹ but, instead of being a bond of love between the members of the Church, as was originally intended, this sacrament has proved a fruitful source of strife between them. Nothing can exceed the abhorrence with which the Mass, so sacred to Catholics, is regarded by zealous Protestants, and no terms have been considered by the latter too severe to express their condemnation of this Catholic rite as a blasphemous superstition. The dispute whether the Eucharist in the Lord's Supper was the veritable body of Christ, or was only meant to signify his body, was conducted among Protestant sects with the same vehemence as the ancient controversy between those who considered the Son of the same substance as the Father and those who asserted that the Son was only like the Father. In both instances an implacable feud was carried on about the most sacred objects of Christian faith, and on points, too, which are beyond the ken of man. As to the disciples of Athanasius and Arius, so to the followers of Luther and Calvin, the person of Christ was the cause of division and hatred.

The whole Christian theory of salvation has in itself all the truly artificial aspects of a planned scheme. The atonement is supposed to have been made by Christ, and then the necessity for it is sought in biblical inci-

made a sort of small idols of seed . . . and ate them as the body or memory of their gods." (*The Principles of Sociology*, i. pp. 275, 276.)

¹ The varying references to it in the New Testament show that we have not had transmitted to us the exact words of Jesus, which must surely have been understood by his Jewish hearers in a figurative sense.

dents and expressions. It really seems as if man were neither the better nor the worse for all that he is thereby debited or credited with. The most fervent Christian can assert in unqualified terms his own inexpressible wickedness, but he hastens to add that his belief in the merits of Christ has made him infinitely better than the rest of mankind, who are not blessed with the same faith in their own unworthiness and in Christ's power of redemption. The non-Christian, again, appears to be able to show in a satisfactory manner that the total depravity with which he is charged does not necessarily manifest itself in a greater degree than original sin in the Christian, which, according to his creed, he boasts to have been taken away from him by the death of Jesus. What is, therefore, required of a man is to give his adherence to certain inscrutable mysteries or events of the past. From a moral standpoint, there is no more justification for imputing to the human race the merits of the vicarious death of Christ than to charge them with the disobedience of Adam. That we should be made responsible for something which is admittedly beyond our control, and then be forgiven by the mere acceptance of certain opinions, is subversive of our whole moral order. This neither satisfies our sense of justice nor does it respond to our conception of God's merciful dealings with man. It is a kind of legal arrangement between two gods dissimilar in their natures, one demanding justice to the full, the other overflowing with compassion for erring man, who is either unfairly deprived of one or undeservedly loaded with the other. Moreover, the traditional view of the Father in heaven ascribed to Jesus has been entirely changed by Christian theology, for therein the relations between God the

Father and man is that of a stern judge and a condemned criminal. There is no question of pardon, for the terrible penalty has been exacted and paid to the full; man owes nothing to God the Father, for all He does is entirely for the sake of His Son.

Nor is the effect of Christ's sacrifice for the human race equal to its claims. The new Adam has not brought back to fallen man the blessings of which Adam of old was deprived for his disobedience. In spite of the coming of Jesus, man still obtains his sustenance by the sweat of his brow, the pangs of child-birth are still imposed on woman, and death overtakes every human being. The baptized believer is too often as sinful as the unregenerate man, and so far from the world having been saved by Christ, he is, according to the Christian creed, the indirect cause of condemnation of the majority of the human race. If the past can serve here as a measure of the future, then the unfulfilled promises of Christ's rule on earth offer no prospect of their realization in heaven.

Judaism knows nothing of the total depravity of the human race, or of the necessity for some great sacrifice to appease the wrath of God. On the contrary, it is assumed that every man is born in the image of God, and possesses the natural ability to rise to a higher life. It is this view which imposes on every man a responsibility for his own actions, according to the light given to him, and, in conformity with the stern warning of the prophet: "The soul that sinneth it shall die," there could be neither the original sin of Adam nor the vicarious atonement of Christ. If any authority for these doctrines be sought in the Hebrew Scriptures by the quotation of stray phrases or incidents, the eighteenth

chapter of Ezekiel is a direct and unequivocal denunciation of any such tendency. Dogmatically, there is no responsibility of the just father for his wicked son, nor of the just son for the wicked father, and, in the name of God, the prophet proclaims: "Behold, all souls are mine, as the soul of the father, so also the soul of the son is mine: the soul that sinneth, it shall die. But if a man be just and do that which is lawful and right, he shall surely live, saith the Lord God." Here there is no room for the far-fetched Christian theory of atonement, either by blood or by faith, but "when the wicked man turneth away from his wickedness that he hath committed, and doeth that which is lawful and right, he shall save his soul alive."¹ The consequence of evil deeds and the tendencies of heredity are indeed fully realized in all their import, but while wickedness is visited upon the third and fourth generation, the Eternal proclaims Himself as "gracious and long-suffering, abundant in goodness and truth, showing mercy unto thousands (of generations) of them that love Him and keep His commandments."²

The presumption that mankind is burdened with a crushing load of sin has created among Christians a strong delusion that those who have not had this weight removed by the help of Jesus are in a most wretched and unhappy condition. On the other hand, the Christian, knowing that he has been delivered from the power of the devil, is supposed to be serene in the peace given by faith in Christ. This specious argument might have

¹ It may be pointed out that the demands of this post-exilic Jewish prophet as the condition of salvation are of a purely moral character.

² Exod. xx. 5, 6; xxxiv. 6, 7; Deut. vii. 9.

sounded feasible, were it not that Christian ecclesiastical history, the only reliable test in this instance, proves the contrary of this assertion. There is no religion, whose component parts have split up in so many mutually hostile divisions, as in the case of Christianity, every section of which is a living proof of religious unrest. There is no agreement in Christendom as to what ensures salvation, and the ultimate test seems not a good life, but adherence to a particular Church. Nor does it seem that even the most fervent adherence to a sect is proof against mental trouble and uncertainty. The Protestants, rent into many factions, apparently endeavoured to make up for the lost authority of the old Church by magnifying the influence of the devil and the terrors of death and hell. The exaggerated fear of sin and of its consequences by which Luther was pursued is well known, and this was due to the Christian conception of the world by which he was profoundly imbued.¹ The morbid dread of God's anger haunted some Protestants to such an extent that it frequently developed into a frenzy, and a check to the Reformation necessarily ensued when, as David Hume puts it, the generation which followed Calvin found that they had to choose between believing that God was a wafer or that God was a cruel tyrant. Although Catholicism is well fashioned to afford complete peace to its votaries

¹ On the different points of view from which death is regarded by the Christian and by the natural man, Luther thus delivered himself in his *Table Talk*: "It were a light and easy matter for a Christian to suffer and overcome death if he knew not that it was God's wrath; the same quality maketh death bitter to us. But a heathen dieth securely away; he neither seeth nor feeleth that it is God's wrath, but meaneth it is the end of nature and is natural."

by rigorously excluding religious doubt as a deadly sin, yet, perhaps on that very account, it is not able to fulfil the object intended. The continuous heresy-hunt in which early Christianity was engaged, led every one of its sections to adopt an uncompromising attitude towards its rivals. Nothing speaks more forcibly against the assertion that traditional Christianity gives peace and an eternal hope to mankind than that great Christian institution—monachism. With an undoubting belief in the atonement of Christ, men ran into the deserts and waste places of the earth, and, like Jerome, condemned themselves to a life in dungeons, “the companions only of scorpions and wild beasts,” while they lacerated their bodies with every conceivable torture which a diseased ingenuity could devise; and, as this great Father of the Church, the enthusiastic and most important advocate of monachism, said, it was all “for the fear of hell.”¹ The struggles of soul among Christians within and without the orthodox and dominant Churches testify that there is nothing in Christianity which can effectively allay the terrors born of the idea of the corruption of humanity, a state of mind which is quite gratuitously or erroneously ascribed to those who do not know and, therefore, do not feel, the consequences of that purely Christian dogma.

The ignoble argument of hell-fire has always had very little effect in convincing Jews of the truth of Christianity, and whenever the threat of danger, and the expedient to evade it by choosing the safe side, is suggested, the Jew might well answer the Christian with the retort of Selden in regard to the similar Catholic process of reasoning

¹ Cf. Milman, *History of Christianity*, iii. p. 204.

with Protestants: "Is their Church better than ours because it has less charity?"¹

A nobler view of Christianity and of human nature is the attempt to identify Christianity with the highest form of civilization by claiming European culture as a product of the religion of Christ. This is so intimately interwoven with the growth of the modern nations of Europe, and has so influenced their mental development, that the history of Christianity and the growth of our civilization are often inseparable. It was the Christian missionaries who were frequently also the first heralds of a higher intellectual life among the barbarians; it was through Christian ecclesiastics that scholarship found entrance among them, and for many centuries the Church alone protected learning and the fine arts. Since the rulers of the Church thereby acquired that exceptional prestige which a monopoly of knowledge always confers, there was a natural endeavour to retain this great power within the caste, with the result that all higher forms of life assumed a Christian colouring. This influence retained undisputed sway until well into the eighteenth century, and is even now still a mighty factor in the fabric and policy of Christian peoples. It is owing to this that there has been formed the idea that European civilization has been created by Christianity, and that the intellectual vigour and material power of the nations professing Christianity are, therefore, due to their creed.

Such a one-sided interpretation of history has, however, met with a reaction which denies the presumed beneficent influence of Christianity, and even maintains that this faith exercised a decidedly pernicious tendency

¹ Quoted by Lecky, *Rationalism*, i. p. 401.

on the intellectual life of its adherents. It should be pointed out that primitive Christianity was an enemy of Græco-Roman art, philosophy and learning, and that it was just owing to the decay of this civilization that the spread of Christianity is to be attributed, a decay which the new religion was as unwilling, as it was powerless, to stop.¹ The Dark Ages which followed the break-up of the Roman Empire was the period during which the Church consolidated its forces, and became a power which reached its acme at the time of the Crusades. The work of Christianity during this epoch shows both its strength and its weakness. The Christian propagandist or priest was in many instances a curbing and ennobling force amongst the warlike races which he converted, but the respect paid to the emissaries and servants of Christ was largely due to the prestige of the Roman name. The greatness of the pagan Empire, which had once been regarded with undisguised contempt and hatred by the Church, now served as its chief instrument of domination. In the same manner, the "false science," which roused the ire of the apostle, was used for the building up of Christian theology to such an extent that the speculations and language of the philosophical schools of the heathen gave birth to Christian theological terms and dogmas of which Jesus and his Jewish apostles did not have the faintest conception. To the morals taken over by Christianity from Judaism, there was thus added a theosophy based on the pagan philosophy of the Greeks, and a system

¹ "It flourished by reason of decadence and it could not arrest it," is the terse verdict of a Rationalist critic on the relations of early Christianity to civilization. (John M. Robertson, *History of Christianity*, p. 186.)

of government of which Rome, once the type of anti-Christ, was the creator. Christianity, however, improved neither on Jewish ethics, nor on Greek wisdom or Roman legislation, but these were often turned into a weak copy or caricature. In the domain of morals there can be no comparison between the ringing passion for righteousness and the lofty ideal of social life which animated the Jewish prophets, and the ethical standard of the Church, squabbling about admittedly incomprehensible mysteries and scrambling for the favour of tyrannical princes. The Greek and Latin writers of the Church were puny, degenerate specimens by the side of their pagan predecessors, and ecclesiastical Greek and Latin reduced these languages to a jargon. Like the classic literature of the ancients, their art was treated with undisguised disdain by the Christian authorities as well as by the spiritual leaders of the people. It was in the realms of architecture and painting that Latin Catholicism distinguished itself. The wonderful cathedrals and sacred pictures of Western Christendom are objects of admiration for all time, and models for the emulation of posterity. That the fine arts were all pressed into the service of religion need occasion no condemnation, and certainly no surprise, if the conditions of medieval Europe are taken into account. But, of course, any cultural advantages which might have accrued from this fact were of a very vague character, and touched only an exceedingly limited sphere. It was in the art of government, which, after all, makes up three-quarters of human well-being, that Christianity has lamentably failed. Although the Papacy inherited the genius of Rome, its marvellous capacity for the government of the most diverse races,

which distinguished Roman rule in its best days, was either lost or turned into a means of creating a theocracy with its worst features. Not for a long time had the religion which claimed Christ as its founder any ambition to work for the social regeneration of the masses. The great aim of the Church has always been salvation, and not morals or happiness. The cry for repentance by John the Baptist was transformed within a generation into a clamour for the right faith. The Christianity of the New Testament Scriptures knows nothing of the ideal earthly polity which formed the dream of the Jewish heralds of a new era, but instead of this there was the Judæo-Christian Apocalypse with its fantastic New Jerusalem somewhere in the skies, or the thorough pessimism and despair as to the ultimate destiny of the human race which filled the dominant Pauline views. There was no future for man on earth ; all his thoughts were to be centred on the effort to save himself from the impending doom.

This produced a natural tendency to monachism, the embodiment of life as it is demanded by the Gospel, a life impossible under normal conditions. The New Testament has nothing to say about the joy of existence, the happy father and mother, whose pride are their numerous offspring, the passion and ideal of the love between man and woman, nothing about the overflowing cup of human happiness. The Gospel view of these earthly things and objects is dismal, if it at all concerns itself with them. Instead of the Passover, with its proclamation of freedom, there was instituted the remembrance of the death and resurrection of Christ ; for the Jewish feasts, in which rejoicing is made a duty pleasing to God, the new faith brought dim promises

of heavenly blessings. Even the stern duties of family and country, of patriotism and social justice, are forgotten by men to whom this world with all its glories was but a fleeting shadow and an accursed thing. The married state was, therefore, considered an evil necessity, a concession to the weakness of the flesh,¹ and the economic problem and the welfare of the body were of no consideration to people who had a strong tendency to communism and regarded prayer as all-sufficient in case of sickness. The growth of Christianity gradually did away with this primitive outlook, but there was no guidance or aid forthcoming from the New Testament, for it had none to offer.

To endeavour to follow the teachings of Jesus and the apostles would put an end to civilization. For not only is Christianity deficient in some of its best qualities, but (by the strangest irony!) its worst and most powerful, militarism and wealth, are those against which Jesus expressed himself most emphatically, though with the least possible effect. In defiance of the uncompromising denunciation by Jesus of the sword, it is by that weapon that, from the time of Constantine, who became a Christian because he conquered in battle, Christendom chiefly won its victories and dominion over non-Christian peoples. In the conflicts between such opposing forces, it was not the faith and morals of the Christian warriors which won the day, but the superiority of their strategical skill and engines of destruction. It is a curious fact that specially among

¹ Paul was firmly convinced of the superiority of the single to the married state, but, if it came to the worst, he thought "it is better to marry than to burn." Hence the glorification of celibacy in historic Christianity.

the higher ranks of the soldiery, whose life-task consists in the extermination of their fellow-men, there is to be found a phalanx of stout defenders of the Christian faith, and so accustomed have Christian eyes become to the glaring anomaly between theory and practice in this regard, that even the Pope, the Vicar of Christ, has an army of his own, which in former times did its business with the requisite vigour and cruelty. The other leading energy behind European might is money, created by enterprise and greed, which, however legitimate from one standpoint, has received the utter condemnation of Jesus. There is nothing in the New Testament in praise of work (which, according to a Jewish view, is both a divine command and the necessary preliminary to the Sabbath rest),¹ but there is a strong discouragement to all those efforts which beget wealth, and the disposal of it to the poor was generally regarded as a test of the discipleship of Jesus. Nevertheless, not very many centuries after its birth, the Church became the richest corporation in the world, and though the Pope forbade Christians to lend money on interest, and the monastic orders pretended to carry out the vow of poverty taken by its individual members, the incomes of the Papal court and of those orders are now largely made up of dividends on their invested capital. Whatever, therefore, may be said of the advantages, or otherwise, of the civilization of Christian nations, there can be no doubt that it stands in direct contradiction to the behests of Christ, and that no attempt whatever is made to adjust it on the lines laid down by him.

¹ "Six days thou shalt do thy work and on the seventh day thou shalt rest."

Intellectually also the highest form of civilization has been non-Christian. When the pagan Empire of Rome was submerged by the flood of barbarians, it was also covered by a mental darkness which lasted until the great scientific revival among the Moors and Jews of Spain. It was from this non-Christian agency that there proceeded for centuries the rational knowledge of Europe, and its intellectual and moral re-birth commenced when the pagan culture of Greece and Rome, and the Jewish spirit of the Bible, were discovered and put into use. The epoch of the Renaissance was marked by a great outburst of intellectual activity, and followed by a religious upheaval. Both movements were hostile to the traditional Church. When these two forces had spent themselves, the progress of thought and social life was led by men who had broken away from the current conception of Christianity, or were its outspoken enemies. As the modern age was ushered in by the tremendous revolt against the dominant system of the religion of Christ, so the great French Revolution betokened the renunciation of Christianity by the intellectual classes of the Latin races. The Fathers of the Revolution, like the leaders of progressive thought during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, were imbued with an antagonism towards Christian ideas, and it would be difficult, if not impossible, to name many thinkers of the front rank, whether in philosophy, science or letters, who, during the last 150 years, have been convinced orthodox Christians. It is remarkable that it is now considered sufficient on their part if they are theistic, but the supreme test of how far the highest thought in Europe is truly Christian is to examine whether the Trinity, the Incarnation, the fall and

redemption of man, etc., really enter into their consciousness ; we know that few men of eminence in the intellectual world take these fundamental principles of Christian faith seriously into account.

The study of the natural sciences has so persistently been opposed by the Church at every step, that a tacit enmity has sprung up between the two forces. Yet it is only to the application of the natural sciences that Europeans owe their true superiority over the so-called inferior races. Technical discoveries, the use of steam and electricity in locomotion and communication, the perfection of the methods of production and distribution, have made the European the master of the world ; all these advantages are entirely outside the scope of Christianity, and, since they all tend to the acquisition and accumulation of riches, they are against the letter and spirit of the teachings of the New Testament.

The world has to be grateful for many benefits conferred on it by Christianity, and the most profound respect is due to those noble-minded Christians, who, from the abolition of the gladiatorial games to the emancipation of the slaves, have endeavoured to instil into the relations of men a higher spirit of mercy towards the weak and oppressed, especially the fallen and the outcast. With an unsurpassed self-sacrifice, these believers in Christ devoted themselves to the relief of the sufferings of humanity, and their successes must command our unstinted admiration. Yet, while it must be recognized that in many of these instances the propelling force was the example and love of Christ, it cannot be admitted that the humanitarian aspects of our civilization are the outcome of that power. Just as a rich intellectual culture had spread in the most diverse parts of the

earth thousands of years before Christianity came into existence, so the human race had evolved its generous emotions without the aid of Christianity. Naturally, different conditions begot different forms in which those sentiments were clothed, but it is gross ignorance or misconstruction of the past and the present to appropriate for Christianity the idea of love of our neighbour and the resultant deeds of mercy. It requires little sympathetic insight into the great world-religions to appreciate the sublimity of the elemental moral power by which they sway the hearts of men. It is to this that there must be attributed the all-engrossing tenderness of Buddhism, as well as that compassion for the poor which is not only a cardinal precept in Mohammedanism, but is also faithfully carried out with exemplary zeal by its devotees. Among the Jews, the care of the weak and the helpless has always been a question of the utmost concern, and the genuine charity of Judaism, where every good action is considered a **מצוה**, a fulfilment of the Divine Will, has raised benevolence to the dignity of **צדקה**, righteousness.

Similarly, the conception of universal brotherhood is not a monopoly of Christianity. Mohammedanism, as a missionary religion, is as much imbued as Christianity with the desire to bring the human race under its influence. Long before the birth of Jesus, Judaism proclaimed the common origin and hope of all the children of men; and even in the distribution of the land in the new ideal Jewish commonwealth, Ezekiel allotted a full share also to the stranger.¹ It was in Judaism that all the peoples were first placed on an equality before God,² while the traditional idea that the Decalogue

¹ Cf. ch. xlvii. 21-23; also Deut. x. 19.

² "Blessed be Egypt my people," etc., Isa. xix. 24, 25.

was proclaimed in all the languages of man, and the offerings in the Temple on behalf of the seventy nations, of whom the world was supposed to be constituted, testify eloquently to the theory and practice of Jewish universality. This standpoint Christianity has not surpassed, whether in its teachings or in its application to life. The announcement in the New Testament of the spiritual equality of all, limits this only to believers in Christ, and it is well known that the principle of equality of all Christians, either in a religious or social sense, has never been carried out in practice. Roman Catholicism is opposed to the toleration of any other section of Christianity, while all so-called heretics, that is the rest of Christendom, are under the ban of the Greek Catholic Church. Indeed, until recent times the unbeliever has always been, directly or indirectly, excluded from the benefits of Christian society. The early Christians were hated by their heathen relatives and neighbours on account of their supposed exclusiveness in abstaining from the customs and feasts of paganism,¹ but when Christianity became the State religion the charge of narrowness was for the same reason levelled by Christians against the Jews. It is overlooked that Christianity, excepting the Protestant sections, has also its dietary laws (such as, for instance, the prohibition to eat flesh-meat on particular days) and many a parent has scruples on certain occasions to eat at the table of his child. The restrictions which Christianity placed on the movements of the Jews, the Ghetto and the yellow badge, were born of the spirit of exclusiveness. It was the Church which made intermarriage

¹ The cry "The Christians to the lions!" was a most popular one.

with Jews a capital offence, and forbade Christians to associate with them, or to participate in any of their social functions.¹ The principle which underlies the Jewish objections to mixed marriages is so sound that it is surprising it should be regarded in an unfavourable light by strangers. For Christian denominations, even at the present day, also fully recognize that the union of men and women of different faiths is an almost insuperable bar to the necessary spiritual affinity and sympathy between them, and is fatal to the existence of any religious body. Therefore, Catholicism and other Christian sects forbid, or at least do not favour, mixed marriages, and endeavour to exert an influence on the upbringing of the children in the true faith. Of course, intermarriages take place in spite of the Church, but these also happen in the case of the Jews, and that sometimes to an extent which inflicts serious injury on the numerical growth of Judaism.²

The so-called anti-Semitic movement, that creation of national Chauvinism and clerical fanaticism, is a significant symptom of Christian exclusiveness, which has submitted the Jews to a social boycott and so thrown them back upon themselves. The special religious,

¹ It is interesting to note that the earliest historical mention of the Jews in England is a decree in the year 740 by Egbert, Archbishop of York, forbidding Christians to appear at Jewish feasts.

² In Berlin, for instance, mixed marriages among Jews occur, on an average, in more than a third of the total number of marriages among them, a percentage which, I believe, is not reached in the case of the Roman Catholic intermarriages in Germany. Jewish mixed marriages in Western Europe are of very frequent occurrence, those in Denmark rising sometimes to nearly 50 per cent. The practical lapse of so many people is, of course, very prejudicial to Judaism.

educational and charitable requirements of the Jews necessitate the institutions established and maintained by themselves, but there is no undenominational humanitarian work which does not find in the Jews ready and generous supporters.¹

It has already been pointed out here that the profession of Christianity by the most advanced nations is not due to its inherent moral or intellectual superiority over every other existing form of faith, since the European peoples adopted their religion when they were yet in a state of barbarism. That the Church should have obtained and retained their allegiance is as much a consequence of accidental circumstances as was the loss of the Orient to the dominion of Christ. It was not Christianity which shaped Europe, but European civilization which has shaped Christianity. This is conclusive from the significant difference between the vigour of Roman Catholicism, the progressive development of the Reformed confessions of the Occident, and the complete stagnation of the Oriental Churches. In spite of every endeavour to stem the tide of modern thought, Roman Catholicism is assimilating new ideas, which will one day destroy the barriers erected against them, but Eastern Christianity has neither the power nor the will to raise itself from its death-like lethargy. The profession of Christianity is, therefore, by no means a guarantee of intellectual and spiritual, or even political, life. The Christian Byzantine Empire, which crumbled

¹ Speaking of Western Judaism as proclaiming the principle of love of one's fellow-creatures, Prof. G. H. Dalman, one of the most competent Christian authorities on Judaism, says: "In this universal principle Judaism and Christianity are in thorough accord." (*Christianity and Judaism*, Eng. tr., p. 43.)

away before the onslaught of Asiatic hordes, was one of the most degraded States in history. Abyssinia, which still lingers on, has sunk to the level of the surrounding countries. The Christian Armenians, the oldest Christian nation, have not been spared any of the sufferings of a conquered race. And with the rise of certain Christian peoples, there has also taken place the decay of others. Spain and Portugal, those ramparts of Roman Christianity, once so great and prosperous, have lost every living vestige of their former splendour, and they have been succeeded by nations with less unquestioning faith and fanatical intolerance, but with greater moral force and broader outlook.

It is not by any magical effects that the blessings of civilization may be obtained. If the first principle of enduring intellectual and material welfare and prosperity be sought, it will be found in the freedom of the person and of the conscience, and, if that be obtained and rightly used, all other things are sure to follow.

It is thus that we must explain the progress of Protestant, in comparison with Catholic, nations. The English were not necessarily imbued with greater faith in Christianity than their former powerful rivals, the Spaniards, but it was the unbridled fanaticism of the latter which brought about their ruin in the Old World as well as in the New, while the generous and wise tolerance of the Anglo-Saxons in both hemispheres has built up the two most powerful and stable commonwealths of the world. It is the critical spirit of the Protestant Churches which has given the nations professing it any superiority they may have over Catholic States, but where, as in Belgium, complete freedom of thought and conscience exists also among a Catholic population, there is no bar

to its progress. The greatness of modern France is for the same reason independent of the faith of the majority of its inhabitants. So that we see that neither the profession of Christianity, nor of any form of it, is decisive in the race of civilization. The non-Christian Japanese, in appropriating all the latest achievements of European science, have by its use risen to the front rank of nations, while the modern Greeks, with a Christian ancestry almost coeval with the apostles and with an unsurpassed legacy of culture bequeathed to them by their pagan past, have since their conversion to Christianity not made any permanent advance in the progress of mankind.

In view of all this, it is unjustifiable to regard Judaism as incompatible with the highest form of civilization. This frequent assumption owes its strength to the fact that outside attention to Judaism is confined to its ancient past, while all its further developments are not thought worthy of further consideration. In judging the relations between Judaism and Christianity, the erroneous suggestion that, in conformity with the dictum "posterius, ergo superius," the later religion must also be the better, has been allowed too much sway. With all our belief in the advance of the world, this view has, in religious matters, no decisive value. It is not, for instance, conceded by Christians that Mohammedanism is a higher form of faith than Christianity. Certainly, Catholics deny that Protestantism has reformed or improved their common religion, while orthodox Evangelicals are not inclined to accede any advantage to their rationalist fellow-Christians. The rapid success of Christian Science does surely not betoken its superiority over the other sects among which it took its rise. Yet

Judaism is treated not merely by Christian theologians, but also in less prejudiced quarters, as a religion without a justification, whose existence is an objectionable anachronism, or, at best, an interesting, if useless, survival, largely because Christianity is a later and, therefore, a presumably higher production. Is it not, on the contrary, the most telling evidence of the inexhaustible vitality of Judaism that, though reaching back to the age of the pyramids, its teachings and ideals rise to a height aspired to by the best thought of modern times? It is the Church, so long the foster-mother and guide of European culture, which finds itself overtaken by hostile forces to which it can offer no effective resistance. The most advanced Christian theologians, who wish to reconcile their religion with the pressing demands of science and philosophy, have had to throw overboard all that has hitherto been distinctive of Christianity. In Judaism, however, there is no fundamental principle which has been vitally affected by the discoveries of the physical sciences, the results of biblical criticism, or the necessities of logic and morals. The ethical Monotheism of Judaism is still the most rational form of a belief in God to which mankind can give adherence, and in European civilization, with its Christian traditions, it is only the Jewish conception of Theism which commands respect among thinking men.

There is no decisive stress laid by Judaism on any theological or ecclesiastical views which may have obtained an authoritative position by reason of their venerable antiquity, as is the case with the idea of the inspiration of the Sacred Scriptures, or on account of having been formulated by an eminent Rabbi, like the creed of Maimonides. The supernatural, in so far

as it affects the question of miracles, plays a very subordinate part in Judaism. In Christianity there is at the foundation some particular dogma, like the total depravity of man, or a belief in certain unauthenticated occurrences, like the virgin-birth or the resurrection of Jesus, or the acceptance of certain metaphysical notions about God, like the Trinity. Fortunately for Judaism, it is saved from such burdens. The difficulties that are engendered by the progress of the natural sciences and the waning of the belief in the supernatural, are of very different proportions in their relative bearings upon Judaism and Christianity. If the story of the first chapters of Genesis, for instance, be rejected as a true account of the creation of the world, there falls to the ground the basis of Christian faith, which rests on the fall of Adam, and any allegorizing of the biblical narrative must inevitably react on the figure of Christ as conceived by Pauline theology. In Judaism, however, there is nothing bound up with that story the abandonment of which need cause any alarm. In spite of all the geological and biological discoveries and researches, the Jewish account of the creation of the world still retains its unique position among the many similar attempts to relate the beginnings of all things, and it still teaches the same old Jewish lesson of God as the Creator of the Universe and of the whole human race without distinction. Nor, as another example, does it matter whether the ascension of Elijah to heaven is relegated to the legends which have grown up around this remarkable prophet, but a similar treatment of the resurrection and ascension of Jesus would be fatal to the divine nature and mission claimed for him. Judaism does not stand or fall with the existence or

personal character of any of its great men. Nor is it, say, of decisive consequence whether or not the Ten Commandments were actually given by God on Mount Sinai; their intrinsic value, as well as the transcendent effect they have exercised on the moral life of untold millions, is beyond question. It is a mistake to consider the ritual of Judaism as an equal counterpart to the dogmas of Christianity. There are certain observances, like the initiatory rite of circumcision or the Day of Atonement, which acquired such universal and undisputed force throughout Judaism that their practice has come to be regarded as a sign of active membership of the House of Israel. But Jewish ceremonialism is essentially the cementing and poetical part of the theistic and ethical structure of the religion. While the ritual of Judaism has hitherto proved itself a strong cohesive agency, it need not necessarily be now a repelling force to those who cannot join in its appreciation.

In the social and political fields, no less than in the religious, Judaism feels itself in thorough sympathy with the struggles and aspirations of the progressive factors of our civilization. Both in thought and action, Jews are effective leaders and allies of every liberal institution or movement, and, since the days of the awakening of the modern spirit of justice and freedom, Judaism is no longer an isolated force, out of touch with its surroundings, but presents a solid phalanx against the onslaughts of reaction. It is, therefore, a fatal error of those Jews who, not being in accord with certain aspects of Judaism, either forsake it for some other form of religion, or sink into indifferentism. Surely, if not they themselves, at least their descendants, will, sooner or later, go to swell those engulfing majorities

of superstition and obscurantism which it was the professed object of those Jews to escape.¹ The Jews are not only the bodyguard of Monotheism, as Heine termed them, but they are also the champions of intellectual and social liberty. Judaism has, therefore, the potentiality of being, even under adverse circumstances, a powerful lever of progress, and it is the duty of every Jew of advanced views to save and utilize this instrument for the good of his kith and kin, as well as that of the human kind. James Darmesteter has well pointed out the intimate sympathy between the aims and hopes of Israel and those of modern humanism. Referring to the connexion between Jewish thought and the French Revolution, he says: "For the first time this thought finds itself in accord, and no longer in conflict, with the general tendency of humanity. Judaism, which from its first hour has always been at war with the dominant religion, whether that of Baal, of Jupiter, or of Christ, at length encounters a state of thought which it need not combat, because it finds there the reflex of its own instincts and traditions. The Revolution is, in fact, only the echo in the political world of a much vaster and deeper movement which wholly transforms thought, and which, in the realm of speculation, ends with the substitution of the scientific conception of the world for the mythical, and, on the practical side, brings to the fore the notion of justice and progress. In this great downfall of mythical religion, the crash of which fills our age, Judaism, such as the centuries have made it, has had the least to suffer and the least to fear, because its miracles and its rites constitute no essential and

¹ This point has been urged with masterly force by Mr. Claude G. Montefiore in his Essay on *Liberal Judaism*.

integral part of it. As a consequence, it does not fall with the rest. Judaism has not made the miraculous the basis of its dogma, nor installed the supernatural as a permanent factor in the progress of events. Its miracles . . . never greatly disturbed the imagination of the Rabbis, nor weighed very heavily upon the thought of the Jewish philosophers. Its rites were never 'an instrument of faith,' an expedient to 'lull' rebellious thoughts into faith; they are merely cherished customs, a symbol of the family, of transitory value and destined to disappear when there shall be but *one* family in a world converted to *one* truth. Set aside all these miracles, all these rites, and behind them will be found the two great dogmas which, ever since the prophets, constitute the whole of Judaism: the divine unity and Messianism; unity of law throughout the world, and the terrestrial triumph of justice in humanity."¹

The election of Israel as a special agency in the religious evolution of man, is neither a dogma nor an assumption of superiority on the part of the Jews. It is a plain fact attested by the existence of Christianity and Mohammedanism. There is no parallel to the influence which Judaism has, directly or indirectly, exercised on a majority of the human race. In spite of all the great philosophical systems which have seen the light in Europe, the religion dominating it still draws its inspiration and strength from the history and literature of the Jews. No one has yet arisen among the European peoples to give another permanent basis to their faith in a spiritual power or a higher life. The utterances and writings of Moses and the other

¹ "An Essay on the History of the Jews" in *Selected Essays*, pp. 272-274.

Jewish prophets, of Jesus and his Jewish apostles, still form the centre round which revolves the religious thought of Europe. St. Augustine, St. Francis of Assisi, or Leo Tolstoy have, after all, been merely endeavouring to expound the teachings of these Jewish masters. The various attempts to place religion above, or outside, the Jewish influences, have, as in the case of Auguste Comte, met with significant failure.

Religion, unlike the natural sciences, does not expect the discoveries of new laws. Those expressions on unfathomable subjects which we owe to the great world-religions, are an all-sufficient inheritance which it is our right and duty to examine and to cultivate. Judaism, the creation of a people in which there has been infused the genius of Religion, does not necessarily represent the absolutely highest form of Truth, but it possesses the highest truths, those eternal verities which will shape the religions of the future. It is of slight moment under what designation these truths shall be embodied, for, after all, the human mind is limited in its capacity to understand, and to give an articulate definition of, the infinite. If materialism, however, whether in the realm of thought, or in the sphere of action, rises at times to the surface, and threatens to obscure the heavens, there need be no fear that passing philosophies and moods will shut us out from the sight of God. Judaism regards indeed the votaries of materialism as those "ch'hanno perduto il ben dello 'ntelletto,"¹ but the Jewish vision is nevertheless full of hope for their future. There will always exist the craving to satisfy

¹ Cf. the reference in Dante's *Inferno*, canto iii, to the *genti dolorose* who have lost the highest good of the human mind, i.e., the knowledge of God.

by an active love of one's fellow-creatures, and by some solemn symbols, those aspirations of the heart and soul of man which idealize the realities of life and turn its ideals into realities. It would be idle to forecast the forms into which this striving for the highest in us will crystallize the growing intellectual and humanitarian forces with which our generation is so rich, but the signs of the modern age point the way to the supremacy of that spirit by which the Torah of Moses proclaims its simple sublimity:—

“This commandment which I command thee this day, it is not hidden from thee, neither is it far off. But the word is very nigh unto thee, in thy mouth, and in thy heart, that thou mayest *do* it.”¹

¹ Deut. xxx. 11, 14.

THE END

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